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NARNIA AND BEYOND

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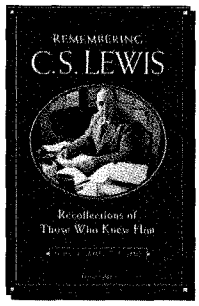

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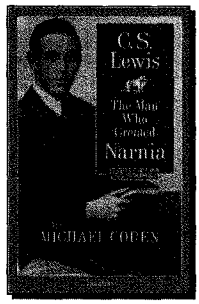

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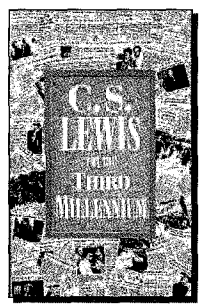

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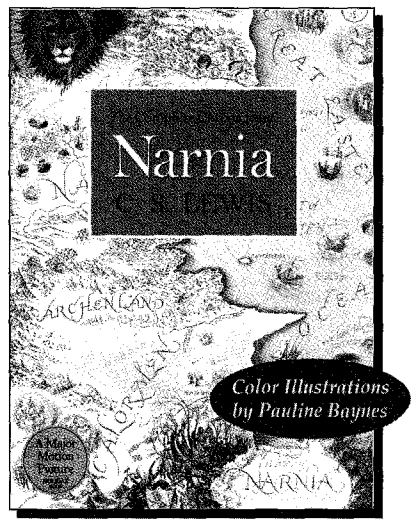

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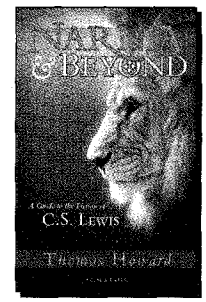

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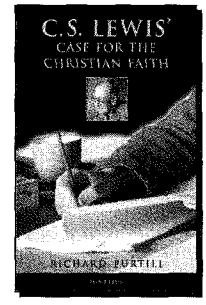

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Speaking of Law

In his review of Steven D. Smith's work ("Law & Language," November), Justice Scalia gets it not so much wrong as incomplete when it comes to his account of the nature of meaning. Using examples from linguistically challenged bridegrooms to typing monkeys, Scalia advances the textualist argument that meaning depends upon a "conventional understanding on the part of readers or hearers that certain signs or certain sounds represent certain concepts," quite without regard to what their authors may intend them to mean. This in opposition to Smith, who takes the position that "textual meaning must be identified with the semantic intentions of *an author.*" Both fail to see the whole linguistic picture.

Although one wouldn't realize it from Scalia's piece, arguments over intentionality and the nature of meaning have generated a substantial literature in twentieth-century analytic philosophy, linguistics, and literary theory. While the points of view run the alphabetical gamut from Austin to Wittgenstein, contemporary philosopher John Searle convincingly articulated a distinction that at least tends toward bridging the gap between Scalia-style conventionalism (with roots reaching to St. Augustine) and Smith-style intentionalism (traceable to the work of H. Paul Grice). In his 1994 essay "Literary Theory and Its Discontents," Searle argues that: "there are at least two types of meaning, the conventional sentence meaning and the intentional speaker's meaning. . . . [A] text can be regarded as either a string of sentence tokens and its meaning examined independently of any authorial intent, or a text can be regarded as a product of an intentional speech act and its meaning examined in terms of the intentions of the author."

Surely this view comports with common sense and experience, as the simple examples of irony, code, and metaphor demonstrate. In such cases, sentence meaning and speaker meaning conflict (as they often do in ordinary discourse), and we privilege one over the other to gauge *meaning* overall, something we ordinarily have no trouble whatsoever in doing. Note also, though, how Searle's distinction helps clear up some of the muddles on both Smith's and Scalia's parts when it comes to their (odd) hypotheticals. Searle would say No to Smith: Word-shaped markings in the desert sand are not meaning*less* even if somehow "natural"; they bear sentence meaning at a minimum. And No also to Scalia: The meaning of the bridegroom's "I do" is *not* "unquestionable" when he intends by that utterance to mean "I do not." For what he has uttered in fact bears *two* meanings on a Searlean analysis, one of which is interpretable prescinding from the bridegroom, but the other of which is not. A justice of the peace may not look beyond sentence meaning in that case, but the Catholic Church, for one, would certainly look (though likely, of course, in retrospect) to try to discern the speaker meaning of the utterance.

Scalia is to be commended for his textualist jurisprudence, but not because he's somehow "gotten it right" about the nature of language or meaning. The properly articulated issue with respect to textualism, once we're clear about the nature of meaning, is whether textualists are justified in focusing on sentence meaning (plus history) to the exclusion of speaker meaning when analyzing legislative texts. They are, for mainly two rea-

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sons: first, constitutions and statutes are ratified or voted upon by the persons, or their representatives, who are agreeing to be bound by them, so a focus on the more generalized sentence meaning is appropriate and, second, with respect to legislatures the notion of a discernible speaker meaning may be less than coherent in the first instance (although there is controversy over that).

Whatever one may think of textualism as a jurisprudential tool, its principles do not outline a larger prescription for the interpretation of language or symbols in general.

John B. Allen
Westport, Connecticut

Justice Scalia's review of Steven D. Smith's book was insightful but also unfortunate. In it, he asserted a dangerous misunderstanding of the rights of unborn humans. Scalia suggested, as he has in other places, that such rights are a matter for the various states to decide. That assertion is incoherent. Without doubt, Americans owe a debt of enormous gratitude to Scalia and jurists like him who practice a genuinely modest role for judges. But there is a point at which excessive modesty can be nearly as dangerous as imperial ambition.

Scalia says that "the federal Constitution says nothing" on abortion, and abortion is "therefore left to be governed by state law." It is likely that a large majority of pro-life Americans hope for just this sort of ruling from the new Roberts Court. Such a ruling will surely help correct the terrible error of *Roe*. But if the Supreme Court decides to follow Scalia's suggested path, it will commit itself to reduced, but still profound, injustice and incoherence.

As Scalia pointed out in his review, words have meaning. To say that persons shall not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law cannot mean anything other than that. To make an exception, to allow states to deprive some people of their right to life simply because they are not yet born, is either to fail to take the Constitution seriously or to fail to take the personhood of the unborn seriously. The life of a person begins before birth. To take a life without due process of law is to violate the federal Constitution. Taking pre-natal life without due process of law is therefore not only unjust—it is unconstitutional.

It is to be hoped that Scalia's understanding of the Constitution will prevail over the utter foolishness of *Roe*. We will owe him gratitude for his long labors when that day comes. But we must also hope that one day even Scalia's improvement will be surpassed, and the Court will simply state the truth.

August Tican
San Diego, California

Although "abortion" is not in the Constitution, "person" is. The Fourteenth Amendment does say that no State shall deprive any person of life without due process of law. "Person" is not primarily a legal term. In fact, its roots are theological and Trinitarian. Is Justice Scalia now maintaining that we must ignore the normal meaning of the term person in favor of "original intent," that the drafters didn't and probably couldn't have even imagined that some would propose to kill the person in the womb? This must be his argument if the Fourteenth Amendment doesn't apply to the unborn, and if states can decide whether killing them is permitted.

Scalia himself seems to fall outside the classical legal tradition he wants to defend, because this tradition accepts (and some, like Jefferson, maintain that it is self-evident) that "God created." Hence there is indeed a primary Author, or Lawgiver, by whose divine light we participate in the eternal law, which we call natural law. Until conservative judges and lawyers are willing to use and defend natural law jurisprudence, we will continue to be governed by godless majorities, whether they are judges or fellow citizens.

Luke A. Macik
Gallup, New Mexico

Antonin Scalia replies:

The three examples John B. Allen cites as demonstrating the need for "international speaker's meaning" seem to me not to make his point. Code is simply an ad-hoc convention. It conveys no meaning other than the "conventional sentence meaning," unless the reader has been told of, or has figured out, the code—which is to say he has learned which different, ad-hoc convention *the words* represent. The speaker is, to be sure, in control of the convention; but his words convey no meaning (other than the common conventional meaning) unless his peculiar convention is known to the reader. As for irony and metaphor, these depend, it seems to me, not upon speaker's intent but upon context. I think it quite possible for a statement to be ironic even though the feckless speaker may not mean it to be so. "Unintended irony" is not an oxymoron. What counts is what the statement conveys, not what the speaker means it to convey. (I suppose it is possible to *define* an ironic statement as one that the speaker *intends* to convey the opposite of what is literally said—but that would prove not the existence of "intentional speaker's meaning," merely the possibility of defining meaning to *be* "intentional speaker's meaning." One can define a horse to be a cow.) And of course my analysis may be correct even though, unlike John Allen, I am not familiar with all the points of view "from Austin to Wittgenstein," and have never even heard of John Searle (as he has not, I suppose, of me).

The answer to August Tican and Luke A. Macik is quite simple: The last sentence of section one of the Fourteenth Amendment does indeed say that no state shall "deprive any *person* of life, liberty, or property,

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without due process of law; nor deny to any *person* within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The word "person" in these provisions could conceivably be meant to include fetuses. That the Fourteenth Amendment does not employ the word in that unusual sense is well enough established by the very next sentence—the first sentence of section two—which reads: "Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of *persons* in each State, excluding Indians not taxed." No one has ever thought that pregnant women must be counted (at least) twice. Philosophers, I suppose, can disregard this affirmation of ordinary meaning, but not judges who pay attention to text. Fetuses may well deserve the same protection against destruction as other human beings; and natural law may well give it to them; but the positive law adopted by the American people and entrusted to the enforcement of their courts does not—unless and until legislation to that effect is adopted. I believe, of course, that such legislation is entirely permissible, since the argument that the Constitution *forbids* protection has even less to be said for it than the argument that the Constitution confers it.

Jews and the Covenant

Avery Cardinal Dulles' essay, "The Covenant with Israel" (November) is a clear, forceful presentation of what, I assume, is an orthodox Catholic view of the role of Judaism in the economy of salvation. Dulles pulls no punches. He does not bow before the pieties of interfaith etiquette.

Both Jews and Christians can appreciate his forthrightness. Dulles believes, without putting too fine a point on it, that Judaism's role, after Jesus, is at best quite limited. The Old Covenant is fulfilled in the New. Whatever remained in the Old that does have an ongoing role (in the moral law, for example) endures, but it has, through Jesus, been given a truer, fuller sense. The ritual law has been nullified; the Aaronic priesthood thoroughly absorbed and transformed by the priesthood of Christ. Jews will eventually join the body of Christ. Their ongoing resistance is a mystery. If I understand Dulles, the mutual exploration *of that* mystery is the purpose of the Jewish-Christian dialogue. Christians can use the dialogue to bear witness to their faith and to learn why Jews remain, despite a lack of adequate grounds from a Christian point of view, Jews.

Is *that*, after all these years, what dialogue is for? I would have thought that, minimally, dialogue is about understanding the other as the other understands himself. I had thought that dialogue is about the selective (and temporary) suspension of theological judgments drawn solely out of one's own tradition in order to allow one to listen to another. What one does with what one has heard surely requires going back to one's own categories in order to make, and perhaps to rework, theological judgments. But can dialogue be conducted solely on the ground of territory already secured by one's own tradition? Doesn't it involve a certain sallying forth onto new, unsecured and insecure ground? If there is no listening, with as full an openness as we can muster, then how does dialogue differ from disputation?

Dulles' views, in my opinion, fail to take into account how Jews understand their own tradition. There is no evidence that his position has been affected by an encounter with a Jewish voice. Drawing upon a long tradition of Christian authorities, Dulles affirms that the "Jewish rites" no longer have any "saving efficacy." But what Jews really think that their "rites" or "the Law," or as Jews would more properly say, the Torah, saves? Neither rites, nor law nor the Torah save; God saves. Every morning, pious Jews recite a prayer that affirms that "it is not on account of our righteousness that we offer our supplications before you, but on account of your great compassion." Our merits and accomplishments are nugatory. We rely only on God's mercy. Nonetheless, as children of the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it is our duty to praise God and to give thanks to Him. An equally accessible, normative text puts it: "Do not be like servants who serve the master in expectation of a reward but be like servants who serve the master without expectation of a reward, and let the fear of heaven be upon you." Paul and his theological descendants describe a Judaism that Jews cannot recognize. Does it suffice for a Christian theologian, who does not dismiss the value of dialogue with Jews, to see Judaism primarily through the eyes of Paul and not through the eyes of living, faithful Jews?

The same importation of Christian frameworks of analysis and evaluation may be found in Dulles' use of such distinctions as ritual or ceremonial vs. moral law and conditional vs. unconditional covenants. I am not saying that these distinctions are not sensible or useful ways of parsing the data of biblical religion. I am saying that they are not Jewish ways of doing so. The rabbis do make categorical distinctions among commandments, but the division of commandments into ceremonial and moral is not one of them. That division serves a Christian apologetic purpose, not a Jewish one. Similarly, the scholarly convention of seeing two types of covenant model at work in the Hebrew Scriptures has utility. In normative Jewish sources, however, the Sinai covenant is unconditional; the eternal validity of the Torah does not depend on human fidelity to it. The new covenant written on the heart, heralded by Jeremiah, is not different from the "old" covenant in content, only in medium. The covenantal way of life, crystallized in the commandments, will be known from within, not learned from without. The recipient of the "covenant

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grant," David, is not, as a Jew, exempt from following the provisions of the "covenant treaty." The distinction that Dulles wishes to draw, as useful as it might be in the academy or in academic Christian theology, fails to do justice to living Jewish thought and faith.

I do not urge anyone to depart one iota from his orthodoxy. If one wishes to enter the way of dialogue, however, one ought to be willing to run its necessary risks.

Alan Mittleman
New York, New York

Cardinal Dulles writes "that according to the teaching of Paul, which is normative for Christians, circumcision and the Mosaic Law have lost their salvific value, at least for Christians, and in that sense been 'superseded.'" He adds: "But I do not wish to deny that the observance of some of these prescriptions by Jews who have become Christians could be permissible or even praiseworthy as a way of recalling the rootedness of Christianity in the Old Covenant."

I am curious to learn on what basis Dulles proposes to divide the prescriptions of the Hebrew Bible into those that Jewish Christians would be allowed to observe and those they would not. More important, I do not agree that Paul believed the commandments of the Hebrew Bible to be no longer obligatory for Jewish followers of Jesus. The issue that concerned Paul was circumcision and Torah observance for gentile Christians. In Acts 15 we learn the problem of circumcision and Torah observance for gentile Christians is brought by Paul to the Jerusalem church where it is debated and the decision is reached that gentile Christians need only the Noachide commandments which, together with their faith in Jesus, justify them before God. But the fact that this issue was debated by the Jerusalem church implies that Torah observance for Jewish Christians was taken for granted in Jerusalem since if Torah observance after Jesus was no longer necessary for Jews, it could hardly be thought to be obligatory for gentiles. Acts 15 together with Matthew 5:17-20 lay a solid basis for the view that Jesus and the early church considered Torah observance to be obligatory for Jewish Christians but not for gentile Christians. Dulles fails to make this essential distinction.

Nevertheless, I am pleased to learn that Cardinal Dulles is willing to entertain the possibility that observance of some of the commandments of the Torah may be praiseworthy for Jewish Christians.

Michael Wyschogrod
Professor Emeritus of Philosophy
Baruch College
City University of New York

Cardinal Dulles' article is a sensitive and nuanced theological analysis of the Catholic view of the present status of God's covenant with a specific people, the Jews. But it would be a mistake to think that this issue is or should be the main engine of ongoing religious dialogue between Catholics and Jews. The real agenda on the theological side of that dialogue, it seems to me, is both sparer and profoundly more difficult: First, eliminate all vestiges of demonization, on both sides. Second, understand and appreciate the present, lived reality of the other partner in the dialogue.

Theological anti-Semitism, which was a piece of what Cardinal Dulles calls "crude supersessionism," was indeed pernicious, but not because it denied the "salvific value" of Jewish faith and observance. Rather, the sin of the old anti-Semitism was that it held Jews to be *uniquely* condemned or cursed, either for their killing of Jesus or their rejection of the Gospel, or both. The consequence was an especially venomous form of hatred and persecution.

The documents of Vatican II, and Pope John Paul II and the present pope, among others, have largely repudiated that old idea. If anything, Jews—described by John Paul II as the "elder brothers" of Christians and by Cardinal Dulles as "most dear to God"—seem now to hold a place of honor *above* those of other faith traditions. But that new view contains its own danger: It still values Judaism largely for its role as the harbinger of Christianity. It still does not fully embrace the second item of the agenda, which is to appreciate Judaism as a lived reality with its own history, its own traditions, and its own theology.

There is much to be said for the view that treats the living faiths of Christianity and Judaism as each equally "young." The trajectory of Christianity since the two traditions separated included the New Testament, the Fathers, Thomas Aquinas, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and the personalist orthodoxy of John Paul II. The trajectory of Judaism included the Mishna, the Talmud, Maimonides, the effects of emancipation, and the existentialist orthodoxy of Joseph Soloveitchik.

In particular, it is crucial for Christians to understand that Jews (of whatever stripe) do not see their religious observance and system of moral and ritual commandments primarily in terms of the Christian category of "salvific value."

To be sure, reward and punishment in this world and the next is a traditional tenet of Jewish faith. But the depth and richness of Jewish self-understanding is elsewhere.

Jewish thinkers have over time suggested a variety of purposes for the commandments—as prescriptions for a good society, as prods to covenantal solidarity, as vehicles for achieving transcendence or contemplating the divine, as theurgic acts contributing to the redemption of the entire universe, or simply as the unexplainable will of God, to be obeyed out of loyalty and love. None of these explanations focus on individual salvation; they reveal a tradition that not only provides different answers than Christianity but often asks entirely different questions.

This might help explain why Jews could take offense at Cardinal

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Lustiger's claim, referenced by Dulles, that he has not ceased to be a Jew. Most Jews do not begrudge Cardinal Lustiger's sincere conversion or his continuing sense of connection to his roots. But they do perceive the wrong-headed view that for a Jew to become a Christian is a matter of deepening or elevating or completing one's prior faith, when in fact it is also a matter of flattening and evacuating and sundering a precious and unique heritage.

It is for God to decide whether that heritage is worthy, but it is for human beings at least to understand and acknowledge its richness and continuing vitality.

Perry Dane
Professor of Law
Rutgers University

Avery Cardinal Dulles claims that salvation will not be denied to Jews who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ. He later adds that even Jewish unbelief is not a ground for condemnation.

In fact, Jews are typically not ignorant or unbelieving, but are *dis*believing: They believe that Jesus is a false Messiah. While Cardinal Dulles may technically be correct that sincere disbelief will not, as such, merit condemnation, it is, given the effects of original sin, surely a very dangerous state in which to be. Since the Catholic Church possesses the certain means of salvation in her sacraments, those who remain out of communion with it are at grave risk.

What I find missing from post-conciliar theories of religious freedom is any sense of the urgency of salvation. This loss of what used to be called "zeal for souls" shows a lack of charity as well as a diminished sense of the reality of evil.

Robert Phillips
Professor of Philosophy
University of Connecticut

Avery Cardinal Dulles does, as usual, a brilliant job in his recent article on the Jews and the Covenant, evading both the Scylla of supersessionist Marcionism and the Charybdis of false equality between the Old Covenant and the New.

At two crucial points, however, he leaves matters somewhat vague. The first point concerns the passing benediction he gives to the idea that a Jewish convert to the Faith might retain particularly Jewish observances "as a way of recalling the rootedness of Christianity in the Old Covenant."

On its face, this seems not to square with the cardinal's previous citation of traditional Church teaching that Jews ought to give up their Jewish practices; neither does he deal here with the admonitions given by St. Paul to the Galatians. Perhaps the more important question is what Cardinal Dulles means when he says that Jewish and Christian "honest differences" about Christ's place as Messiah and Lord are a "powerful incentive for dialogue."

Is this but a more modern, and modest, manner of suggesting that Christians preach Christ to their Jewish brethren? I expect so, but wonder why Cardinal Dulles did not state this more clearly. Perhaps a clear statement would become a stumbling block for future dialogue.

Mark Wyman
Physics Department
Cornell University

A few questions regarding Cardinal Dulles' article, "The Covenant with Israel." I am Jewish and have always been confused about how Christians view the notion of being commanded. I take Cardinal Dulles to say that the Church accepts the Decalogue to the extent that it is consistent with natural law, but does not accept the parts that are "ceremonial." If that is the case, why engage with the Commandments at all? An assertion that God chose to outline some of the natural law in the Ten Commandments would seem to suffice. In that case, we would not be commanded, but morally bound to follow the natural law.

Peter R. Silverman
Toledo, Ohio

Avery Cardinal Dulles replies:

Alan Mittleman has rightly understood the intent of my article. I wrote it as a corrective. Too often Christians have misled Jews, giving the impression there are two parallel covenants, equally pleasing to God, so that Jews do not need to be evangelized. Such a view, I maintain, is irreconcilable with the New Testament and with the whole Catholic tradition. It is contrary to Vatican II (which expressed the hope that the whole world would recognize Jesus Christ as Savior), and incompatible likewise with current magisterial teaching, which is normative for Catholics.

Dialogue is an excellent thing. It has purposes much broader than those that Mittleman attributes to me. My article does reflect the findings of recent dialogues, which emphasize God's continuing predilection for the people of his choice. But Christians in dialogue should be vigilant to avoid what Vatican II called "false irenicism." John Paul II repeatedly warned against the temptation in dialogue to conceal or minimize real differences, as did Cardinal Ratzinger (the present Pope Benedict) in *Dominus Iesus* (2000). In the great jubilee celebrating the Nativity it was especially urgent to proclaim the universal Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I did not article attempt to say how Jews understand themselves today. Some, no doubt, would agree with Mittleman when he states that because God is Savior the rites by which we worship him are not salvific. But others might think that when we worship God according to His precepts we dispose ourselves better to receive his favor and blessings. Are the covenant blessings automatic, arbitrary, or contingent on our obedience?

It will be for Jews to say how far they have changed from the time of

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Paul, who practiced Judaism according to the Pharisaic tradition of his day. Professor Mittleman has every right as a Jew to hold for the eternal validity of the Torah and to propose categories and distinctions unfamiliar to Christians. I welcome his forthrightness and hope to learn from him and others how Jews understand the requirements of fidelity to the covenant today. In a frank and honest exchange, Jews and Christians alike can profit. Jews as well as Christians can no doubt revise their theological judgments and find new areas of commonality.

Robert Phillips would, I assume, agree with me that no one is beyond reach of salvation and that no one should take salvation for granted. Persons who through no fault of their own do not know Christ and the Church can be saved, provided that, with the help of God's grace, they sincerely seek God and strive to do his will as it becomes known to them.

This statement, which I took from Vatican II, does not lay down conditions that are easy to fulfill. All who are in a position to recognize Jesus as Messiah and Lord have an obligation to believe and confess his Name. If they join the Church, they will have many more helps to salvation, but also greater responsibilities, because much is required from those to whom much is given (Luke 12:48). I do not see that my article reflects a lack of zeal for souls. I only hope that it is a zeal "according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2).

In answer to Perry Dane, I would like to recall that Jesus demands sacrifices on the part of those who would follow him. They may have to surrender cherished friends and familiar customs and landmarks.

But many converts from Judaism testify that they find again, on a new level, the very things they seemed to be losing, including the ones Mr. Dane lists: divine prescriptions for a good society, covenantal solidarity, the sense of transcendence, contemplative union with God, and obedience motivated by loyalty and love. In Christ they find the Redeemer of the universe.

Because I had in mind the statements of Paul in Galatians and the words of the Council of Florence, I was cautious in what I said about Jewish converts to Christianity who continue to observe some prescriptions of the Jewish Law. I said only that I do not wish to deny that such observance might be permissible or laudable, provided the rituals are not seen as still operative as means of salvation. One could perhaps argue that Paul and the Council of Florence meant to forbid only a reliance on these rituals as salvific.

To the questions of Peter Silverman I would have a twofold answer. In the first place, the fact that the Ten Commandments in great part reiterate provisions of the natural law does not make them useless. We obey the precepts because they are commanded, but we recognize that we would be obliged to obey them even if they were not commanded, because the actions they prohibit are evil in themselves. The revelation of God's law gives us a new motive and a greater clarity about the law itself.

Secondly, the ceremonial aspects of the Ten Commandments enrich our understanding of Christ and the Church. We continue to cherish the ceremonial law for its typological significance. The deliverance of the Jews from their Egyptian bondage, alluded to in the first commandment, prefigures Christ's delivery of his people from the captivity of sin. The Jewish Sabbath prefigures what Christians celebrate as the Lord's Day. By understanding the Jewish roots of their faith, Christians more fully who they are.

I am pleased to hear from Professor Wyschogrod, since in my article I touched on his interesting proposal regarding the observance of prescriptions of the Mosaic Law by Christian converts from Judaism. As noted in my response to Perry Dane, I am not prepared to deny that Jewish converts might legitimately wish to observe certain Jewish precepts, provided that they do not regard such observances as obligatory.

In saying that some precepts of the Mosaic Law might be observed, I had in mind the impossibility of observing them all. The prescribed Temple sacrifices, for example, can no longer be offered.

Wyschogrod goes further and holds that according to the early Church and Paul, Jewish converts were bound by circumcision and Jewish dietary laws. Here I must disagree. As for Paul, he insists in Galatians 2 that he and Peter, as converted Jews, are free from these observances. According to Acts 10, Peter learned by special revelation that Christians, including himself, were exempt from Jewish food laws. Acts 15, cited by Wyschogrod, does not legislate for Jewish Christians, but Peter's speech in verses 7 to 11 is consistent with Acts 10. As for Matthew 5:17, the other text cited by Wyschogrod, it presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. This could well mean that the higher righteousness of the new law achieves all that had been anticipated by the Mosaic Law and the prophets. This interpretation harmonizes with Romans 10:4, Ephesians 2:15, and many other New Testament passages.

Representative Lutherans

In "Lutherans Undefined" (November), Robert Benne laments the progressive leadership of the ELCA, is relieved by the decisions made concerning sexuality, and appalled by the "egregious . . . actions foisted upon the assembly."

I can agree with him that the national leadership of our church did an excellent job of campaigning for progressive change. What concerns me about his assessment of the churchwide assembly is the way he

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patently ignores how the governance of our church works.

Every synod of our church sends representatives to the churchwide assembly. The synods elect their representatives from among the voting members of their annual assembly. Our system of governance is very democratic and therefore, at least in theory, is capable of electing representatives who share the prevailing views of each synod. When the representatives come together to conduct the business of the ELCA, they are representative of the entire church. How they vote on each issue says something about the prevailing attitudes within the ELCA.

Benne seems to be confused about who the ELCA is. The ELCA is not the elected leadership; the ELCA is all the baptized children of God who gather every Sunday to worship the crucified and risen Christ. These are the people who participate in the election of synodical bishops as well as the election of the presiding bishop. Who they elect is an indicator of where the majority of the church is on any given issue.

The churchwide assembly knows what it is doing when it elects a presiding bishop, and it is aware of that bishop's views when he or she is elected. It was clear when our presiding bishop, Mark Hanson, was elected that he had progressive views. It seems to me that our presiding bishop and the Chicago-based leadership of the ELCA are a reflection of the prevailing views within the ELCA as a whole.

Rev. Randy Jones
Montgomery, Alabama

Robert Benne replies:

Randy Jones takes issue with me on two related points. First, that I argued the ELCA leadership is moving the church in a more "progressive" direction without the knowledge and consent of the majority of its members. (He contends that the membership of the ELCA affirms and supports that "progressive' direction.) Second, that I implied that the national leadership acts undemocratically in furthering its agenda. (He believes that the ELCA is an accurately functioning representative democracy, and therefore its "progressive" direction is a true reflection of the majority will.)

There are number of problems with his arguments. First, the vast majority of ELCA members live at the local parish level and have little interest in synodical (regional) and churchwide (national) affairs. The largest portion is made up of lukewarm Christians who do not sense anything important at stake in the debates over sexuality issues. A smaller portion are traditional Lutherans who are unaware of the changes being proposed. When they become aware, they become upset. Some can be gathered into various efforts of resistance carried on by already energized traditional Lutherans; some of the traditionally minded just leave the ELCA.

The smallest portion agrees with the "progressive" direction of the ELCA. (Of those who responded to the studies of the ELCA Task Force on Sexuality, almost two thirds wanted no change and about a fifth supported change in traditional Christian teachings on homosexual conduct. But the vast majority of ELCA members participated in no study group and registered no opinion.) So it is difficult to make the case that the great mass of nearly four million ELCA members supported the measures proposed by its Church Council. From those that tuned into the controversy, a definite majority wanted to keep traditional teachings and practices. The churchwide expression of the ELCA seems to be at a different place than the members of its local expression.

After ignoring these figures, Pastor Jones then offers a somewhat dubious account of ELCA governance. He begins by saying that congregations and synods elect representatives. As an ELCA pastor he should know that the word "representative" is anathema to ELCA authorities. Those elected are "voting members" and are supposed freely and conscientiously to vote their own conscience, not represent anyone. Even the ELCA denies that it is a representative democracy.

And, of course, it is not, nor should it be. It should not be a representative or any other kind of democracy when it comes to core doctrine. One of the truly worrisome things about the Orlando Assembly was that a two-thousand-year, near-universal tradition of Christian moral teaching could have been altered by a majority vote.

Will the Trinity in its patriarchal form—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—be the next target? Even in other matters that could be appropriately settled in a democratic matter, the ELCA is far from that. Some synods have never had a "voting member" on the Churchwide Council. Indeed, efforts were made to expand the membership of that council so each synod would have a voting member. That was defeated.

Finally, I would strongly deny that the ordinary ELCA member knows the "peace and justice" agenda of Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson. When he speaks to ELCA constituencies he spins homey yarns of his family and moves into the evangelical rhetoric of the pietistic tradition from which he comes. When he spoke to a conservative Virginia Synod assembly last summer he received a standing ovation because he pressed all the right buttons. But, as I argued in my article, the agenda he really fights for is the liberal Protestant one.

Correction: Helmut David Baer, co-author of an article on just-war theory discussed in these pages, teaches at Texas Lutheran University, not the University of Texas.

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Opinion

Private Acts, Public Interests

Robert P. George

Theorists of public morality—from the ancient Greek philosophers and Roman jurists on—have noticed that apparently private acts of vice, when they multiply and become widespread, can imperil important public interests. This fact embarrasses philosophical efforts to draw a sharp line that distinguishes a realm of "private" morality that is not subject to law from a domain of public actions that may rightly be subjected to legal regulation.

Considered as isolated acts, someone's recreational use of narcotics or hallucinogenic drugs, for example, may affect the public weal negligibly, if at all. An epidemic of drug abuse, however, though constituted by discrete, private acts of drug taking, damages the common good in myriad ways. This does not by itself settle the question whether drug prohibition is a prudent or effective policy. But it does undermine the belief that the recreational use of drugs is a matter of purely private choice into which public authority has no legitimate cause to intrude.

Much the same is true of pornography. Even in defending what he believes is a moral right to pornography, Ronald Dworkin has identified the *public* nature of the interests damaged in communities in which pornography becomes freely available and widely circulates. Legal recognition of the right to pornography would, Dworkin concedes, "sharply limit the ability of individuals consciously and reflectively to influence the conditions of their own and their children's development. It would limit their ability to bring about the cultural structure they think best, a structure in which sexual experience generally has dignity and beauty, without which their own and their families' sexual experience are likely to have these qualities in less degree."

In my 1995 book *Making Men Moral* and elsewhere, I have argued that Dworkin's efforts to derive from the principle of equality a moral right to pornography never manage to overcome the force of the public interest in prohibiting or restricting pornography that he himself identifies. That interest is *not*, fundamentally, in shielding people from shock or offense. It is also something much more substantial: the interest of every member of the community in the quality of the cultural structure that will, to a large extent, shape their experiences, their quality of life, and the choices effectively available, to themselves and their children, in a domain of human affairs marked by profound moral significance.

When we bring this reality into focus, it becomes apparent that the familiar depiction of the debate over pornography regulation as pitting the "rights of individuals," on the one side, against some amorphous "majority's dislike of smut," on the other, is false to the facts. The public interest in a cultural structure—in which, as Dworkin says, "sexual experience has dignity and beauty"—is the concrete interest of individuals and families who constitute "the public." The obligations of others to respect, and of governments to respect and protect, their interests is a matter of justice.

It is in a special way a matter of justice to children. Parents' efforts to bring up their children as respecters of themselves and others will be helped or hindered—perhaps profoundly—by the cultural structure in which children are reared. Whether children themselves ever get a glimpse of pornographic images in childhood is a side issue. A decent social milieu cannot be established or maintained simply by shielding children from such images. It is the attitudes, habits, dispositions, imagination, ideology, values, and choices shaped by a culture in which pornography flourishes that will, in the end, deprive many children of what can without logical or moral strain be characterized as their right to a healthy sexuality. In a society in which sex is de-personalized, and thus degraded, even conscientious parents will have enormous difficulty transmitting to their children the capacity to view themselves and others as persons rather than objects of sexual desire and satisfaction.

There is more to the picture. We know that a more-or-less unbridled culture of pornography can result in a sexualization of children which robs them of their innocence and even places them in jeopardy of sexual exploitation by adults. Can anyone honestly deny that we have ourselves witnessed a shameful sexualization of children in our own culture? The clergy child-abuse scandal is only the tip of an iceberg. The problem of pedophile sex tourism to places like Thailand is a dirty secret that will sooner or later break upon the American consciousness and conscience. Should we be surprised at such a thing? Think about the sexualization of adolescents in contemporary music, television, movies, and commercial advertising. Consider the notorious Calvin Klein ads on New York City buses depicting

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young people in sexually provocative poses. And now Abercrombie and Fitch have taken things to the logically next step by peddling thong swimwear to twelve-year-old girls.

Of course, commercial advertisements are generally not defended on the ground that they constitute "art." But pornographic art can present the same problem. Sometimes obscenity or pornography is defined in such a way as to exclude anything qualifying as "art" from falling into the category. I see no reason for this, whether we are considering the issue from the point of view of possible legal regulation or in some other perspective. Someone might argue that the artistic value of certain pornographic depictions—you may recall Robert Mapelthorpe's photograph of a bull whip in a rectum—provides a reason (or additional reason) to immunize it from legal regulation. But such depictions remain pornographic, and their negative impact on public morality cannot be denied. Moreover, it is difficult to see how any degree of artistic merit could justify the insult to morally conscientious taxpayers when they are forced to pay for pornographic depictions.

Art can elevate and ennoble. It can also degrade and even corrupt. Whatever should be done or not done by way of legal restriction of pornographic art, we ought not to make things easy on ourselves by pretending that art cannot be pornographic or that pornographic art cannot degrade. Nor ought we to avert our gaze from the peculiar insult and injustice involved in the government funding of pornography.

There are real and substantial human and personal interests competing with those desires or interests we label "freedom of expression" when it comes to the question of art and pornography. If we, as a society, are to decide against these interests—particularly if we are to do so categorically—we should face up to what we are prepared to sacrifice, particularly when it comes to the well-being of children. And if judges are to impose a decision against these interests on a public that views the matter differently, they should shoulder the burden of providing a legal and moral justification for doing so.

It will not suffice to make mere appeals to "established constitutional principles," or to the fact that a right to free speech is enumerated in the constitutional text while interests competing with it in the case of pornography are not mentioned. The truth is that so-called established constitutional principles on free speech and pornography are, at best, weakly justified in the cases. A bare reliance on the mere fact of an enumeration of a right to free speech will simply confirm the validity of the arguments advanced by Hamilton and other founding fathers against the Bill of Rights—namely, that the enumeration of certain rights would distort the scheme of liberty established in the body of the Constitution by miseducating Americans about the nature of constitutional government and the moral substance of their rights.

Robert P. George is McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton.

Jews vs. Christians

David Klinghoffer

These are troubled times for Jewish-Christian relations. In November, two influential American Jewish leaders, representing large swaths of the Jewish community, gave major speeches vilifying politically conservative Christians. As an Orthodox Jew who has long worked with evangelicals, Catholics, and other serious Christians, I would like to propose an ameliorative measure aimed at furthering inter-religious peace and friendship: Let every Christian gently ask a Jewish friend for a moment of his time. Tell him you've been following the news about some of the statements issuing from Jewish organizations in regard to conservative Christians. Tell him you're confused and concerned. In a spirit of affection and respect, ask your friend if he would be willing to answer six simple but puzzling questions.

Preface this by giving the relevant recent background information. Mention that Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the liberal Union for Reform Judaism, the country's largest Jewish denomination, called Christians and other religious conservatives "zealots" and "bigots." Harshly attacking opposition to gay marriage, Yoffie remarked, "We cannot forget that when Hitler came to power in 1933, one of the first things that he did was ban gay organizations."

Yoffie, whose movement includes 1.5 million members, spoke on the heels of comments from Anti-Defamation League national director Abraham Foxman. "Today," Foxman said, "we face a better financed, more sophisticated, coordinated, unified, energized and organized coalition of groups in opposition to our policy positions on church-state separation than ever before. Their goal is to implement their Christian worldview. To save us!" Foxman warned that evangelicals in particular have "built infrastructures throughout the country," intending "to 'Christianize' all

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aspects of American life, from the halls of government to the libraries, to the movies, to recording studios, to the playing fields and locker rooms of professional, collegiate, and amateur sports, from the military to SpongeBob SquarePants."

In view of these provocations, here are the questions I'd suggest that Christians ask:

• *Is it not true that Jewish leaders have better things to worry about than the spiritual fate of SpongeBob SquarePants? Let's say, about radical Islam? Or secularism? At a time when radical Muslims threaten Jews and others around the world, why vilify American Christians?*

Yoffie and Foxman spoke at a time when fellow Jews were worried about disturbing news from across the Muslim world. In France, Arab youths rioted—the same youths who since 2000 have been harassing French Jews, burning synagogues, and desecrating Jewish cemeteries. In Egypt, television viewers had just enjoyed a month-long dramatization of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The president of Iran called on Muslims to "wipe Israel off the map." Meanwhile, the number of Jews lost to any form of Christianity is minuscule compared to the number lost to nothing, to secularism. If the ADL's institutional purpose is to safeguard the existence of the Jewish people, if the Reform movement cares about Jewish souls as well as Jewish bodies, why has neither group ever campaigned against the threat posed by secularism?

• *If conservative Christians were less politically powerful, would this help or hurt the security of the state of Israel?*

No nation has been a better friend to the Jewish state than the United States, and for this, our country has earned the enmity of Israel-haters around the globe. In shaping American policy, domestic Christian pro-Israel sentiment has been at least as influential as Jewish support. Let's say, for the sake of argument, that some of them really are looking forward to Armageddon, in the manner of the *Left Behind* books, with a global war centered upon Israel playing a key role in the unfolding of events at the End of Days. However distasteful you might find that view, please consider: If these same Israel-loving conservative American Christians all retired from political activism now, would Israel be better off or worse? Safer from attack or less so? Would America be a more faithful defender of the Jewish state or a less faithful one?

One prominent religious conservative, Donald E. Wildmon, chairman of the American Family Association, has said forthrightly that attacks on conservative Christians endanger Israel's safety. In a December 5 radio interview, Wildmon said of Foxman's latest salvos, "You know, he's got himself kind of in a bind, because the strongest supporters Israel has are members of the religious right, the people he's fighting. He's got himself in a bind here. Because the more he says that 'you people are destroying this country,' you know, some people are going to begin to get fed up with this and say, 'Well, all right then. If that's the way you feel, then we just won't support Israel anymore.'"

• *Practically, what positive ends could anti-Christian attacks possibly accomplish?*

Presumably Foxman and Yoffie, in provoking Christian conservatives, had in mind some positive and practical goal of benefit to the Jewish community. They hoped to accomplish a goal beyond provocation. But what that goal could be is hard to discern. When the Anti-Defamation League and other liberal groups campaigned against Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ*, Gibson refused to change his film. Yet the anti-Semitism the ADL warned the movie would spur never even began to materialize. Clearly that ADL campaign benefited no one—except possibly the ADL. What are the chances that the latest insults will convince Christians to give up their political goals and moral principles? If the chances are slim, why risk alienating friends and fellow citizens?

• *If evangelicals seek to "Christianize America," a phrase implying legal coercion, when is the last time anyone tried to Christianize you?*

Whenever I ask fellow Jews to explain their support of leaders such as Yoffie and Foxman, the most frequent response I get is that these men defend us against those who would pressure Jews to convert to Christianity. Yet no one I know can point to a personal experience of having been pressured to accept Jesus. Is it possible that Jews think that "Christianizing" is rampant only because the Yoffies and the Foxmans tell us so? True, Foxman can always trot out a quotation from someone in the fever swamps that are supposed to somehow represent the perspective of conservative Christians as a whole. Thus, he points out, something called the Alliance Defense Fund says "court victories are vital steps to . . . reclaim the legal system for Jesus Christ." But in a big country like America, you can always find some organization that articulates any political or other philosophy that one can possibly imagine. Quote that marginal group and—bingo!—you've now "proven" that its bizarre ideology represents a significant threat just because it has been written down somewhere and nailed up on a website. But honestly, does this tell us anything about the sentiments of the majority of American Christians?

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• *How do you explain the fact that "bigoted" Christian political positions mirror the traditional views of your own religion, Judaism?*

Judaism, as understood for millennia, mostly agrees with conservative Christian views on abortion, euthanasia, religion in public life, and other issues. If it's "Nazi"-like to oppose gay marriage, as Rabbi Yoffie argues, then Jewish tradition must also be Hitlerian. The Hebrew Bible forbids homosexual intercourse, and Jewish rabbinic thought warns against tampering with the institution of marriage. Indeed, a classical rabbinic midrash explains that one of the reasons God was so disgusted with the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and caused the land to disgorge them in favor of the children of Israel, was that the Canaanites wrote marriage contracts for members of the same sex. Why are these views evidence of "zealotry" when held by Christians but not so when held by every generation of Jews universally down to about a hundred years ago?

• *Have you considered the economics behind these anti-Christian attacks?*

A self-perpetuating loop of disinformation feeds Jewish fears: Jewish leaders scare us with the bogeyman of the Christian Right. That causes Jews to open their wallet. If questioned about this, Jews explain that they need to support the Yoffies and the Foxmans because, after all, look at what the Christian Right is up to! The fact that Foxman's organization has $52 million in yearly expenses, including Foxman's own $412,000 in total compensation (according to publicly available 2003 tax information), is not irrelevant. The dynamics of a non-profit organization make it imperative that the group continually prove to funders that it remains relevant.

Some non-profits demonstrate their relevance by offering thoughtful commentary on current events or other vital information. But are anti-Christian provocations the best way to spend tens of millions of dollars? Remember that we live in a time of massive Jewish assimilation into the wider secular culture—a disappearance of Jewish families driven in large part by Jewish cultural impoverishment and ignorance of Jewish faith and tradition. Imagine if Abraham Foxman's salary alone were spent on sending Jewish kids to Jewish schools. Given the goal of preserving the Jewish people, would that be a better or worse allocation?

These are fair questions, and millions of thoughtful Christians must have wondered about them since the early 1990s when Jewish groups like the ADL started lambasting religious conservatives. There is nothing threatening about a Christian politely requesting some clarification. So go ahead, Christians, ask away. Frankly I would be curious to know what answers you get.

But beyond satisfying curiosity, can the disinformation loop actually be broken? I believe there is value in Christians—as distinct from me, a fellow Jew—politely questioning their Jewish friends. When the questions come from outside the seemingly airtight bubble of Jewish-American culture, perhaps the startling fact of actually being confronted by a real Christian will force Jews to rethink our community's reflexive support of irresponsible leaders. It might just work.

David Klinghoffer is a columnist at the Forward *and a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute. His most recent book is* Why the Jews Rejected Jesus: The Turning Point in Western History.

Requiem for a Parish

Emily Stimpson

It was built by Polish immigrants—workers in the steel mill and the glass factory that sat along the bend in the Ohio River. The Poles were poor, poorer than the Irishmen who built St. Peter's less than a quarter of a mile away, and poorer even than the Italians who erected Holy Name Parish on the opposite side of town.

Their poverty was evident in the church's pillars, made of wood not marble. Pine not oak went into the construction of the long pews lining the center aisle. Some skilled artisan, however, with tricks of paint and stain, did give the pews the look of tightly grained oak. His work was good. Only now, ninety-five years later, do chips in the paint reveal the secret.

The parishioners spent their money wisely—money that would have gone towards meat for their Sunday dinners, new coats for their wives, and sweets for their children if not for their dream of a Polish parish. They splurged on the stained glass, with its images from the Bible glowing in red, purple, and gold. The statues and the high altar that filled the narrow sanctuary were also extravagences.

On Sundays, the Polish parents would bundle their American children in layers of wool to protect them from the winds and the wet of the Ohio winter. Or they would wrestle them into their Sunday best, defying the stifling heat, thick with the river and the stench

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from the mills. Then, as a family, they would walk up the hill to St. Stanislas Catholic Church.

They didn't have far to walk. The Poles had built their parish in the midst of their own neighborhood, tiny bungalows and four-squares crowded close on either side of narrow streets. Perched halfway up the hill, between the overflowing downtown and the new developments on the bluffs, the parish towered over all the city's other churches—Protestant and Catholic alike. Inside their church, named after their homeland's greatest saint, they heard the gospel read in their native tongue and sang the hymns of their grandfathers. Inside, they were home.

The years passed. The wives' coats grew thinner still as they launched the building fund for the new school. Spacious classrooms, a crucifix over every door, and rows of desks for little children whose last names contained an excessive number of consonants—that was their second dream. When it finally opened, it was staffed by an army of nuns, kind and stern, young and old, all in black.

More years passed. More baptisms, more weddings, more funerals. They put a kitchen in the basement and outfitted the classrooms with microscopes and maps. Their American children grew up and grew wealthy. Those were the days when steel was king," but, slowly, the neighborhood started to change. The American children's children moved away from the valley and the bluffs, where the smell of steel still lingered. Two miles away the air was cleaner and the homes were newer. At first, they drove back to the church their grandparents built, but the narrow streets had little room for their Chevys and their Buicks. Parking below the hill and walking up was not convenient. So they joined the new parish by their new homes, the one made of glass and steel. Then came the upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s, and along with it a series of pastors who didn't know the old ways. They took down the high altar, sold the statues, and ripped out the altar rails. The candles stopped burning. The choir loft stood empty. The organ was silent.

More years. More funerals. Precious few baptisms. Steel was no longer king. The school closed when there were not enough children to fill the desks. The bishop shut up the rectory, and the parish began to share a priest with the Irish parish. Daily Masses stopped. One Sunday Mass remained. And the faithful remnant scattered in the pews were too poor, too old, and too few to think of bringing back the statues and the high altar for which their parents had sacrificed countless ginger drops and ice cream sodas so many years ago.

This Sunday, if you walked into St. Stan's around 9:30 A.M., you would see two to three dozen parishioners, gray-haired and bent; one, maybe two young families who for one reason or another weren't going to the 11:00 Mass at St. Peter's; and several pews filled with young people in their twenties and early thirties, attractive, stylishly dressed, decidedly out of place. Those young people properly belong ten blocks away, in the chapel of Franciscan University of Steubenville. They have come to this otherwise forgotten corner of the Ohio Valley to study and work at the school, a sort of Mecca for the American Catholic faithful.

While they pray in the silence of St. Stanislas, alongside grandmothers in polyester pants and grandfathers in short-sleeved shirts and ties, their peers are packed into Christ the King Chapel. A dozen priests line the sanctuary and the singing echoes in the street. Inside the chapel, the faith is visibly alive. It is an eclectic harmony of crying eyes and praying hands, of bohemian skirts, worn flip-flops, and brown scapulars, of contemporary Christian music and ancient liturgical rites. It is the universal Church, new every morning. The young people come from every state in the nation, the descendents of immigrants from the East and West, North and South. They are converts, reverts, and lifelong Catholics. They are passionate about their faith, and they know nothing of Catholic ghettos and Polish hymns.

There are hundreds if not thousands of St. Stanislases scattered across America—immigrant parishes whose days are ending. But there are few who stand so close to this newer, younger, untamed Catholicism. To see them both, to walk from one to the other, is to stand between two ages. Or perhaps, more accurately, it is to stand at the point where one age gives way to the next.

And in a way, that's why the small band of young adults makes their way to St. Stanislas each week. Because they know what was is passing away. And they want to hold on to it for just a little bit longer. Not because they reject the new. Rather, they hold on because, while they still can, they want to understand what was best and most beautiful in the last age—the age where for a few glorious decades churches like St. Stanislas embodied the Catholic faith in America.

They know the practice of the faith was no more perfect then than it is now. Clericalism and a dry scholasticism drained much of its vitality away. Culture, not catechesis, was the framework that held the immigrant American Catholic Church together. And when the culture collapsed, so did the faith of a generation. But, for all those problems, it was a beautiful chapter in the life of the Church, filled with simple faith, devotion, and sacrifice. There were many babies and many nuns, many people willing to give for the Christ they adored. There were men and women who saw in their humble little parish a glimpse of heaven.

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Ninety-five years have passed since St. Stanislas was built. And this year will be its last. A few months ago, the bishop of Steubenville announced that soon the doors of the parish will close forever. A few hundred immigrants' dream will then stand empty until the day the wrecking ball comes and the diocese sells the property back to the city. It was a beautiful dream while it lasted, and in the hearts of those who learned from it, the heart of the dream—the sacrifice of the faithful and the poetry of a parish—will linger still.

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Hrothgar's Homily

I tell you this tale as I mull and marvel
how the Almighty metes to mankind
the blessings of reason, rule, and realm.
He arranges it all. For a time He allows
the mind of a man to linger in love
with earthly honors. He offers him homeland
to hold and enjoy, a fort full of fighters,
men to command and might in the world,
wide kingdoms won to his will.
In his folly, the fool imagines no ending.
He dwells in delight without thought of his lot.
Illness, old age, anguish, or envy:
none of these gnaw by night at his mind.
Nowhere are swords brandished in anger;
for him the whole world wends as he wishes.
He knows nothing worse till his portion of pride
waxes within him. His soul is asleep;
his gate, unguarded. He slumbers too soundly,
sunk in small cares. The slayer creeps close
and shoots a shaft from the baneful bow.
The bitter arrow bites through his armor,
piercing the heart he neglected to guard
from crooked counsel and evil impulse.
Too little seems all he has long possessed.
Suspicious and stingy, withholding his hoard
of gold-plated gifts, he forgets or ignores
what fate awaits him, for the world's Wielder
surely has granted his share of glory.
But the end-rune is already written:
the loaned life-home collapses in ruin;
some other usurps and openly offers
the hoarded wealth, heedless of worry.

Beloved Beowulf, best of defenders,
guard against anger and gain for yourself
perpetual profit. Put aside pride,
worthiest warrior. Now for awhile
your force flowers, yet soon it shall fail.
Sickness or age will strip you of strength,
or the fangs of flame, or flood-surges,
the sword's bite or the spear's flight,
or fearful frailty as bright eyes fade,
dimming to darkness. Afterward death
will sweep you away, strongest of war-chiefs.

from Beowulf
translated by Alan Sullivan
and Timothy Murphy

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Evangelicals and Others

Timothy George

The resurgence of evangelicalism in American religious life can be gauged by various measures, one of which is the attention lavished on it by the secular media. In some ways, evangelicals came out of the prayer closet in 1976, dubbed by *Newsweek* on its cover, "The Year of the Evangelical." That was the year a born-again Southern Baptist, Jimmy Carter, was elected president. Three years after *Roe v. Wade* had made abortion on demand the most compelling moral issue of our times, 1976 was also the year a Southern Baptist of a different political bent, Charles Colson, Watergate villain turned prison reformer, published his own bestselling conversion story.

We might compare 1976 with 2005, when *Time* magazine featured on its February 7 cover "America's twenty-five most influential evangelicals." The *Newsweek* and *Time* cover stories are bookends to the evangelical story in America over the past generation. *Time*'s evangelicals constitute a sort of mosaic of today's evangelical subculture. There are African Americans, Hispanics, women preachers, apocalyptic seers, lobbyists, missiologists, postmodernists, writers, radio preachers, megachurch pastors, a few scholars, and, *mirabile dictu*, two Catholics: the junior senator from Pennsylvania, Rick Santorum, and the editor-in-chief of First Things, Father Richard John Neuhaus.

Between *Newsweek* in 1976 and *Time* in 2005, a remarkable thing happened to evangelicals: They emerged from their conventicles, storefronts, and crystal cathedrals to embrace—however tentatively, erratically, and sloppily—something their forebears would have considered anathema: an ecumenical quest for Christian unity that includes at its heart a serious and ongoing engagement between evangelicals and Catholics. The group that meets as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" is an important piece of an overall shift that J.I. Packer, another of *Time*'s twenty-five, has called "irreversible and transformational." Indeed, five of *Time*'s twenty-five are original signatories to the first "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" statement in 1994 and at least another ten could be considered sympathetic fellow-travelers.

Evangelicalism, as I define it, is a renewal movement within historic Christian orthodoxy with deep roots in the early Church, the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and the great awakenings of the eighteenth century (and it includes puritanism, pietism, and pentecostalism, as well as fundamentalism). Throughout the history of evangelicalism, there has been a paradoxical tension between the Church as a sectarian enclave on the one hand, and the Church as the body and bride of the undivided Christ on the other—just as there has been a tension between being an alienated outsider and a quintessential American, and a tension between global mission and national revival on the one hand and a turned-in-on-itself piety and exclusivism on the other.

But perhaps all this is best understood through biography. Several years ago, three icons of the movement died within a few months of one another, each in his nineties. Carl McIntyre was a writer, radio preacher, and rabble-rouser, the *bête noir* of Presbyterian fundamentalism. Carl F.H. Henry was the first editor of *Christianity Today*, a formidable theologian, ethicist, and strategic thinker. W.A. Criswell was the champion

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of Southern Baptist conservatives and for nearly fifty years pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, which for many years was the largest single congregation in America and the biggest Baptist church in the world. The primary link among them, indeed the figure who looms over this entire theme, is Billy Graham: McIntyre's inveterate enemy, Henry's collaborator, and a member of the church where Criswell was pastor.

Willa Cather once wrote that "the world broke in two in 1922 or thereabouts." This was certainly true for those conservative Protestants who in 1920 took the name "fundamentalists," declaring themselves ready to do "battle royal" within the major denominations for the cause of Christ. By the end of the 1920s, when Carl McIntyre left Oklahoma to enroll at Princeton Theological Seminary, most of the battles for denominational control had already been lost. The Scopes Trial was a public-relations disaster of seismic proportions, and conservative Protestants seemed to be everywhere in retreat. The fundamentalists were still in their own country, but they were no longer at home. They had become ideologically displaced and culturally homeless.

McIntyre was made for such an environment and quickly enrolled as a foot soldier on the losing side of the Armageddon-like battle for control of Princeton Seminary. He was a protégé of J. Gresham Machen, a learned scholar of real ability who had studied in Germany and who commanded the respect of even H.L. Mencken who once dubbed him "Dr. Fundamentalis," as opposed to William Jennings Bryan whom he called "a fundamentalist of the barnyard school." McIntyre did not possess Machen's intellectual depth, but he had a knack for gutter politics and was a valuable ally when Machen left Princeton to establish Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

When Machen was finally suspended from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, ostensibly for violating his ordination vows, McIntyre sided with him again, but their alliance did not last long. In 1937, shortly before Machen's death, McIntyre led a group of disaffected followers to form the Bible Presbyterian Church, while the Machenites regrouped as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. There were two reasons for this schism. One was McIntyre's insistence on total abstinence from alcohol, an issue the Machen group considered a matter of Christian liberty, while the Holiness and pietist traditions had long emphasized the importance of a Christian life separated from the world—no alcohol, tobacco, dancing, cards, or theater, along with no short skirts or bobbed hair for women. The other reason for schism was McIntyre's insistence on dispensationalist premillennialism, a distinctive form of prophetic teaching widely but not universally held by conservative evangelicals.

This kind of apocalyptic eschatology reinforced a radical cultural dualism and provided a cosmic urgency for the true believers to "come out from among them and be separate" (2 Corinthians 6:17). This apocalyptic eschatology is also the backdrop for McIntyre's intense opposition both to Catholicism and the emerging ecumenical movement. When McIntyre discovered that the first general assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) was to be held in Amsterdam in 1948, he arranged to arrive a few weeks earlier to establish his own counter-movement, the International Council of Christian Churches. Although the Catholic Church had bluntly rebuffed an overture to participate in the WCC gathering, the very fact that they were invited, together with the presence of Orthodox participants, not to say Protestant modernists, was enough for McIntyre to see the emergence of the one-world church of the last days foretold in the Book of Revelation. The political counterpart to the World Council of Churches was the United Nations, which he saw as the Great Beast of Revelation 13. McIntyre's superpatriotic political activism, which intensified in the 1950s and 1960s, must also be seen in the light of such an apocalyptic hermeneutic.

McIntyre's rejection of the Church of Rome was thus much more severe than that of his mentor. Machen, of course, was a conservative of a distinctively Presbyterian stripe, and he knew well the depth of the historic divide between Catholicism and his own Protestant confessional tradition. And yet, in the context of resurgent unbelief and the evacuation of historic Christian truth claims among certain putative heirs of the Reformation, he was willing to say that the gulf between Rome and Geneva was negligible compared to the gaping chasm—he used the word *abyss*—separating classic Christians from those who eviscerated the historic Christian faith. In 1910 the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church had adopted the "Five Fundamentals" that were to become a rallying cry for conservative Protestants: the virgin birth of Christ, the inerrancy of scripture, objective substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, and authenticity of the biblical miracles. And these were not points of conflict with Catholicism.

McIntyre would veer still further away from Machen's legacy. Machen had grown up in Baltimore, a city with Southern proclivities since before the Civil War, and he embraced the distinctively Southern Presbyterian doctrine of "the spirituality of the Church." According to this view, the task of the Church was the

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care of souls and the maintenance of the true faith within the community of believers, not social and political engagement. When the Church becomes a political lobby, Machen warned, when it advocates political measures whether good or bad, it is turning aside from its proper mission. Machen's concern was for the purity of the Church which, he believed, could only be maintained if the Church refrained from meddling in political affairs. Thus Machen, unlike most of his conservative peers, then and now, opposed Bible reading and prayer in the public schools as well as Christian political action on behalf of Prohibition. Machen's worst fears came to fruition in his student McIntyre for whom the distinction between true Christianity and superpatriotic Americanism was very thin indeed.

While Carl McIntyre was loudly protesting outside the World Council of Churches meeting in Amsterdam in 1948, a young twenty-nine-year-old American observer was on the inside listening to theologians such as Karl Barth and Lesslie Newbigin. His name was Billy Graham, and he was there as a representative of Youth for Christ, a student evangelistic movement. Over the next decade, Graham would come more and more into the crosshairs of McIntyre, whose own church had split yet again, but whose voice was magnified through his publication, the *Christian Beacon*, and through his radio broadcast carried on hundreds of stations, the *Twentieth Century Reformation Hour*. A pioneer of talk radio, McIntyre and his faithful sidekick, "Amen Charlie," became familiar voices to thousands of listeners across America as the "P.T. Barnum of American Fundamentalism"—blasting everything and everyone who wiggled even slightly to the left. Meanwhile, Billy Graham's increasingly popular ministry had the backing of the National Association of Evangelicals, the brainchild of one of McIntyre's former classmates, Boston pastor Harold John Ockenga, who had launched this new effort in 1942, the year Graham graduated from Wheaton College.

Ockenga was the mover behind "neo-evangelicalism," a term he coined to describe a kind of progressive fundamentalism that would be "anchored to the Rock, but geared to the times" (to quote the motto of Youth for Christ). Ockenga and his collaborators were determined to maintain the distinctive doctrinal heritage of conservative Protestantism. But they would do so, they said, without fragmentation, segregation, separation, criticism, censoriousness, suspicion, solecism. The National Association of Evangelicals would thus be, they insisted, different from McIntyre's American Council of Christian Churches. It would be "no dog-in-the-manger, reactionary, negative, or destructive type of organization," but one determined "to shun all forms of bigotry, intolerance, misrepresentation, hate, jealousy, false judgment, and hypocrisy." Billy Graham's ministry was a part of this effort, which included the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947, the Evangelical Theological Society in 1949, and *Christianity Today* in 1956.

Carl McIntyre had never been a fan of Billy Graham, but other fundamentalists, such as Bob Jones and John R. Rice, had supported his early crusades. He seemed to preach the same gospel message they did and many thousands were being converted to Christ through his ministry. But Graham's 1957 New York crusade, which lasted for eight weeks in Madison Square Garden, led to a permanent parting of the ways. The kind of ecumenical evangelism Graham was putting into practice was too much for McIntyre and the other fundamentalists. In the April 25, 1957 issue of the *Christian Beacon*, McIntyre published an article by Walter Patrick asking, "Why has all this come upon us?"

> WHY does Dr. Graham always advise converts to "go to the church of your own choice," instead of directing them to fundamental assemblies?
>
> WHY is he allowing himself to be drawn into the modernistic ecumenical movement that is gaining such momentum each passing year?
>
> WHY did he allow smoking at the banquet in New York City on September 17, 1956, with prayers being offered by modernists?
>
> WHY did he (as did Cardinal Spellman) recommend a moving picture, "The Ten Commandments"? Does he endorse the theater for believers?
>
> WHY doesn't he wake up to the fact that fundamentalism can't "play ball" with modernism anymore than the USA can with Communism?
>
> WHY this statement, Dr. Graham: "The Catholic Church has been very friendly to me anywhere I have gone"? Tsk! Billy!

Graham tried to respond to the biting attack from his right, but he was no match for McIntyre—who may have been, as Leonard Sweet has described him, "a mental and spiritual oaf who presented himself as an absolute rectum of rectitude," but was not one to lose a debating point easily. Why was Graham speaking in New York under the sponsorship of the theologically questionable Protestant Church Council? "Well," Billy said, "the apostle Paul had been 'sponsored' by the Greek philosophers when he preached on Mars Hill." "Yes," came back the reply, "but he did not give the names of his converts to the priests of the pagan temples!" Speaking at a meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals, Graham made his position

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clear. "I intend to go anywhere, sponsored by anybody, to preach the Gospel of Christ if there are no strings attached to my message. I am sponsored by civic clubs, universities, ministerial associations, and councils of churches all over the world. I intend to continue."

As he grew older, the logic of McIntyre's separatism pushed him into a tinier and tinier corner of the evangelical world. His denomination split yet again and, near the end, the church he had pastored since 1933 in Collingswood, New Jersey, forced him out. In 2002 he died, as he had lived, as a "come-outer." McIntyre never softened his stand against modernism, neo-evangelicalism, or Billy Graham, but his staunch opposition to Catholicism was qualified in one respect. Though he had once spoken of the "Roman terror" as a worse threat to American freedom than communism, in the 1950s he collaborated with Catholic senator Joseph McCarthy in his anti-Communist efforts. And, like many other Protestants including Ockenga, McIntyre warned against the dire consequences of electing a Catholic president in 1960. But, in a case of ideology trumping ecclesiology, he backed Barry Goldwater in 1964 despite the fact that his running mate, William Miller, belonged to the same church as John F. Kennedy.

When Ockenga and his friends set in motion what would become the post-war evangelical renaissance, they were concerned with far more than "reforming fundamentalism" (as George Marsden titled his history of Fuller Seminary). Reforming fundamentalism was a means to an end, and the end they had in mind was nothing less than the "rescue of western civilization by a . . . revival of evangelical Christianity." H.L. Mencken had blasted fundamentalism as the religion of the "mean streets of America," an obscurantist faith that flourished "everywhere where learning is too heavy a burden for mortal minds to carry." One had to admit that there was some truth in the indictment. Believing, as he put it, that "the Gospel deserved better," Carl Ferdinand Howard Henry became the key theological spokesman for the new evangelical agenda.

The son of German immigrants, Henry was born in New York City in 1913. His father was Lutheran by tradition and his mother Catholic, but his upbringing was void of religious conviction. "We were Christmas and Easter Christians," Henry recalled, "We had no family prayers, no grace at table, no Bible in our home." Henry found work as a journalist, first as a reporter with the *New York Times*, then as editor of his own paper on Long Island. At age twenty, he became a born-again Christian through the personal witness of a visiting businessman. He never tired of talking about his conversion to Jesus Christ and this gave him a natural affinity with his Wheaton classmate, Billy Graham.

Henry's 1947 *Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* was completed while he was finishing his doctoral studies at Boston University. It was a tract for the times and a trumpet call which set the direction of evangelical social and cultural engagement for the next half-century. Metaphysics and ethics go together, Henry insisted, and unless evangelicals attend to this fact, they run the risk of being reduced to "a tolerated cult status" and forfeiting "another world hearing for the Gospel."

Uneasy Conscience was not an attempt to set forth a new revisionist paradigm for evangelical theology. It was an effort, as Henry would say later, "to restate where fundamentalism ought to be in the light of its own heritage." Henry rejected liberal versions of the social gospel which tended to be all social and no gospel, but he appealed to an earlier evangelical consensus of cultural engagement that included the work of William Wilberforce in campaigning for the abolition of the slave trade in England, the revivalist impulses of Charles G. Finney against slavery in this country, as well as evangelical concerns for suffrage, temperance, child labor laws, fair wages for workers, and many other progressive issues to which many theologically conservative Christians were once committed—before what David Moberg has called "the great reversal," an evangelical withdrawal from such concerns.

Besides criticizing dispensationalism for its culture-disabling mentality, Henry—always a strategic thinker—set forth a vision by which evangelicalism could reinvigorate itself and its engagement with American society. His five-point agenda for post-fundamentalist evangelicalism included: (1) clarification of the philosophical implications of biblical theism, (2) Christian engagement with the pressing social issues of the day as well as concern for individual salvation, (3) refusal to divide over secondary matters such as the details of biblical prophecy, (4) openness to the possibility of a biblically faithful ecumenicity, and (5) the development of a truly biblical theology that took into consideration the whole sweep of salvation history.

The fourth item, the quest for a biblically grounded ecumenism, was a theme to which he often returned as the founding editor of *Christianity Today*. Henry was clearly the best qualified evangelical thinker to serve as editor, though he was not the first choice for the job. Some felt that he was too heady and intellectualist. After the first edition of *Christianity Today*, Billy Graham wrote a six-page cri-

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tique reporting an impression of Henry's editorial as an example of "obscurity reaching for profundity." As a matter of fact, Henry was reading more widely, and thinking more deeply, than practically anyone else in the evangelical orbit (his only rival may have been his Fuller colleague, Edward J. Carnell). In the process he was introducing a new generation of evangelicals to a world of thought—and to a way of thinking—not available on the ordinary circuit of Bible conferences, summer camp meetings and youth revivals.

Several of Henry's early editorials in *Christianity Today* show an awareness of developments both in pre-Vatican II Catholicism and mainline Protestant ecumenism. On the Protestant side, he tried to stake out a *via media* between the compromised theology of Harry Emerson Fosdick and his successors on the one hand and the truncated ecclesiology and harsh temperament of sectarian fundamentalism on the other. If modernism stands discredited as a perversion of scriptural theology, fundamentalism is discredited as a perversion of the biblical spirit. The fundamentalist neglect of the doctrine of the church had left it vulnerable to a fissiparous tendency that made light of the grievous sin of schism. There are only two legitimate reasons for church division, Henry alleged, apostasy and discipline. To fragment over less serious issues, especially over the trivial concerns that lay behind so many evangelical church splits, was to besmirch the Body of Christ. This could be justified by appeal neither to the Fathers nor to the Reformers.

During these years, Henry began to speak of "the evangelical church," in the singular, not referring to any particular denomination but to all conservative Protestants committed to the formal and material principles of the Reformation. In Henry's mind, the evangelical church certainly included groups such as the Southern Baptist Convention, the Christian Reformed Church, the Missouri Synod Lutherans, and the various Pentecostal bodies, along with the churches affiliated with the National Association of Evangelicals, though he always realized that this was a fragile coalition.

Henry's attitude toward Catholicism during this period was evolving and complex. In the July 22, 1957, issue of *Christianity Today*, Henry's editorial was entitled "Billy Graham and the Pope's Legions." He recounts having coffee with "a learned Jesuit" at Harvard Square whom he quizzed about the future of the Catholic Church in America. He looked at me, Henry said, with flashing Irish eyes and thundered, "Today, tomorrow, or a century from now, it makes no difference. We are patient. We *will* subdue the earth to the greater glory of God." Henry rejects this imperious attitude, but then responds with a little imperialism of his own. Referring to *Life* magazine, which ran stories about Billy Graham and the Knights of Columbus in the same issue, Henry contrasts these regimented "soldiers of the pope" with *Life*'s pictures of Graham's crusade:

> The reader sees a young man in a business suit. He is holding an open Bible. In passionate love he pleads with sinners to repent. The pictures are in black and white, not color. There are no uniforms, no banners, no legions. The Garden is filled with people from all walks of life, people whose hearts are hungry as their minds are curious. Before Billy Graham has finished, hundreds leave their seats to unite with the person Jesus Christ. Even priests of Rome find their way to the mourners' bench. The suasions of Rome are no match for the Gospel. . . . The Pope must look to his legions because he can no longer look to the Gospel.

Two years later, Henry wrote a *Christianity Today* editorial entitled "Rome and the Revival of Theology." He reports on the renewal of biblical scholarship within Catholicism and the emergence of a new attitude to past formulations such as those of the Council of Trent. Too much should not be expected too soon, he warned. Yet for the first time since the Reformation, he believed, "genuine intercommunication has become possible where previously there could be little more than ineffectual goodwill at best and narrow contentiousness as the more general rule." On January 25, 1959, Pope John XXIII surprised the world when he announced the first ecumenical council to be called since 1870. Henry followed the events of the council with great interest. While never compromising his sturdy Protestant convictions, he called on evangelicals to reject the "ghetto mentality" that kept them away from the table of dialogue and he urged them to "reach out with heart and hand to our spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ" within the church of Rome.

Two Henry editorials from the opening year of the council in 1962 reveal his hopeful but cautious attitude toward the changing situation. The pope, Henry notes, had appealed to the separated brethren to return homeward: "The way is open, this is our Father's House, take or retake your place in it." And in response, Henry quotes Luther, Calvin, and Peter Martyr to the effect that they had not departed from the Church at all but rather had returned to it in their recovery of the doctrine and ordinances of the apostles. Henry does not deny that contemporary Protestantism, including evangelicalism, stands in need of continual reforming and repentance, but he insists that any genuine rapprochement between Rome and the Reformation will be based squarely on the foundation of biblical faith.

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In his *Christianity Today* editorial the following week, Henry picked up this same theme. "Evangelical failure to delineate Christian unity in a positive way should trouble our conscience and provoke evangelicals to exemplary leadership. If unity based on theological concession is undesirable, disunity alongside theological agreement is inexcusable.... It is time for evangelicals to find their ecumenical posture, and to set forth the doctrine of biblical unity which will preserve the vitality of the Gospel without compromising the witness of the Church."

Carl Henry left the editorship at *Christianity Today,* somewhat involuntarily, in 1968 and turned his attention to other matters. His major project was his six-volume *God, Revelation and Authority*, a theological epistemology of epic proportions, but one that deals little with the Church. As Henry grew older, he grew less sanguine about evangelicalism and ecumenism. In a candid article published in *Christian Century* in 1980, Henry admitted his earlier and more optimistic vision of a grand evangelical alliance had come to nothing, and he placed much of the blame on Billy Graham, one of Henry's few critical comments about his former classmate and collaborator. Henry's dream for a great American evangelical university of national rank also failed to materialize. Even *Christianity Today*, Henry thought, had squandered an opportune moment by moving from Washington to the evangelical hinterland near Wheaton, by becoming a populist organ rather than challenging the cognitive frontiers of the era, and by becoming obsessed (for a while) with the intra-evangelical debate over biblical inerrancy.

Henry's reaction to Evangelicals and Catholics Together was also mixed. Henry was a strong advocate of cobelligerency but he was hesitant to endorse a movement that moved beyond the ecumenism of the trenches to the recognition of a spiritual oneness based upon a common apostolic faith, even though such a development had been presaged by Henry himself in his earlier writings on Christian unity. He never joined the critics of Evangelicals and Catholics Together on the raucous right, but neither did he give unstinted support to this invitation.

More than most evangelical leaders, Henry was critical of dispensationalism with its culture-denying tendencies, but he never embraced the easy optimism of the postmillennial position. Though he came to believe that we were living in the "twilight of a great civilization" (as he titled of one of his last books), he continued to live by the hope that survives all diverted reformations and disappointed schemes for ecclesial renewal. Eric Miller has summed up Henry's enduring legacy well: "By urging Christians to wage together what he once termed the 'age-old battle against unbelief,' he called us to a present and future catholicity premised on the sovereign rule of the Son of God: the beneficent King of a realm that will come, one day, to be unified on earth as it is in heaven. There are worse visions to champion."

Although Henry had been baptized and held ordination with the Northern Baptists (the "American Baptists" after 1958), during the 1980s and 1990s he became more closely linked with the Southern Baptist Convention, lecturing in its seminaries, serving on various committees, and quietly supporting the conservative redirection of the denomination during those years. And this activity brought him into closer contact with a man named W.A. Criswell.

Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Wallie Amos Criswell was a Texas tornado of a preacher (and Billy Graham's own pastor since 1953). Criswell sometimes referred to himself as "a holy roller with a Ph.D.," and he mesmerized the throngs who came to hear him in Dallas preaching with the bombast of Billy Sunday and the urgency of Savanarola. Criswell is usually written off as a flamboyant fundamentalist with a theology slightly to the left of the Flat Earth Society. One of his books was called *Why I Preach that the Bible is Literally True.* He campaigned long and loud against "evil-lution," and he once publicly referred to his moderate opponents as "skunks." Yet he could be narrowly exclusive and generously embracing at the same time—embodying the paradoxical tension that courses through evangelical Christianity.

When W.A. Criswell was born on the wind-swept plains of the Southwest in 1909, the Southern Baptist Convention was beginning to recover from Reconstruction. The definitive split between Northern and Southern Baptists had just occurred, and a new era of denominational consolidation was about to begin. In this period of expansion, Southern Baptists began to explore relations with other Christian groups. Such cooperation had arisen on the mission field as Baptists were challenged to work with other believers in the task of world evangelization. A key 1914 document declared, "This convention rejoices in the many evidences of increasing interests in the subject of Christian union among Christian people everywhere.... We firmly believe that a way may be found through the maze of divided Christendom out into the open spaces of Christian union only as the people of Christ follow the golden thread of an earnest desire to know and do his will. But, meantime, we may have the rare joy of fellowship and cooperation in many forms of endeavor wherein angels might well desire to have a part."

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This remarkably optimistic statement on Christian unity was offset by the other emphasis on denominational efficiency. Here "entangling alliances" with other bodies holding to different standards of doctrine and different views of church life and church order were dismissed in favor of "a complete autonomy at home and abroad." Denominational efficiency became the name of the game in the decades following World War I as the Southern Baptist Convention adopted its first confession of faith and a unified program of finance called the "Cooperative Program." This internal process—fueled by the leftward tilt of mainline ecumenism and the vigor of Baptist Landmarkism (the idea that Baptist congregations constitute the only true churches in the world and can trace their lineage through unbroken succession back to Christ himself)—reinforced the desire of Southern Baptists "to do our own work in our way," as E.Y. Mullins, one of the more moderate Baptist leaders of this period, put it.

Not so moderate was the statement by the leader of the Arkansas Baptists, printed in the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* in 1919: "The colossal Union Movement is a colossal blunder, but it threatens us Baptists unmistakably. My word to all the Baptist preachers of the land would be: Smite, smite, hip and thigh, the 'bastard' Union Movement, dear preachers of God's Book, by calling every Baptist soul under the reach of your prophetic voice to toe the denominational line, and then to show his faith by his fruits."

Even with the wider evangelical community there were questions—beginning with the question of whether Southern Baptists actually are evangelicals. One of the most strident rejections of Southern Baptist evangelical identity came, oddly enough, in the 1976 "Year of the Evangelical" issue of *Newsweek*. Foy Valentine, then the head of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, declared: "We are *not* evangelicals. That's a Yankee word. They want to claim us because we are big and successful and growing every year. But we have our own traditions, our own hymns, and more students in our seminaries than they have in all of theirs put together."

Ironically, perhaps, in the 2005 issue of *Time*, Valentine's successor, Richard D. Land, one of Criswell's protégés, was included among the twenty-five most influential evangelicals, as was another Southern Baptist, Rick Warren, whose call to pastoral ministry was confirmed in a personal encounter with Criswell. In fact, Criswell had been forging ties with evangelicals for many years, not just with Billy Graham and Carl Henry, but with Charles E. Fuller, and Richard Halverson (who invited Criswell to preach at his evangelical Presbyterian church), with Cameron Townsend, the founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators, with the Moody Bible Institute, and with Nazarene leaders (who so impressed Criswell with their camp-meeting mourners' bench that he came back to Dallas and installed kneelers in every pew—a genuine innovation for Southern Baptists).

Criswell's involvement in wider evangelical causes made him open to the kind of tentative evangelical ecumenism that Carl F.H. Henry was advocating in the pages of *Christianity Today*. On two issues in particular—race and the pope—Criswell demonstrated a remarkable capacity to change. In the 1950s Criswell, like many tall-steeple pastors in the South, was a champion of racial segregation. He criticized the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education*, and in 1956, at the invitation of the governor, he addressed a joint session of South Carolina's legislature to support the concept of separate but equal for churches as well as for the public schools of the land. When asked at the time to comment on Criswell's *apologia* for segregation, Billy Graham replied that he had never agreed with his pastor on that subject. In the throes of the civil-rights movement, however, Criswell went through a period of soul searching and came to the conclusion that racial segregation could not be defended on biblical principles. In 1968 he recanted his earlier statements and preached a well-publicized sermon on "The Church of the Open Door": "I have come to the profound conclusion," he said, "that to separate the Body of Christ on the basis of skin pigmentation is unthinkable, unchristian, and unacceptable to God."

Criswell's early attitude to Catholicism reflected the consensus that had led the denomination's foreign missions leaders to divide the world into "Papal Fields" and "Pagan Fields." Criswell, along with many other evangelical leaders, opposed Kennedy in 1960. By 1971, however, he became the only Southern Baptist Convention president to meet with the pope. Criswell received a barrage of criticism for that meeting, and even more for his comments: "When the Pope offered his hand to me, did I compromise the faith when I offered my hand back again in love and friendship? . . . What is it being a Christian, to be a Baptist? Is it that I find myself in some corner, and there I fight and snarl and cut and, with all the language at my command in vitriolic and acrimonious speech, I denounce and condemn? Is that what it is to be a Baptist? Or is it somebody that has found the Lord as his Savior and in love and in prayer and in sympathy and in intercession seeks to hold up the cross of Christ and

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invite all men everywhere to find in him that life eternal that blesses us now and in the world that is to come?"

This meeting of the Baptist pastor and the pope signaled an important shift not only in Criswell's own attitudes but also in the general relation between Southern Baptists and Catholics. In his earlier sermons on the Book of Revelation, Criswell had followed the traditional line in equating the Scarlet Woman of Revelation 17 with the Catholic Church. While he never retracted these views, Criswell's rhetoric against Catholicism was greatly muted in his later years, as he came to see that there could be "anonymous Baptists," so to speak, within the Church of Rome. The theological basis for this shift in Criswell's preaching was the doctrine of the universal Church, that is, the Church understood as the spiritual union of all of the redeemed of all of the ages. This view, set forth by St. Augustine and revived by the Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century, can lead to a kind of ecclesial docetism, but it also has ecumenical possibilities. It enabled Criswell to break free from the narrow Landmarkist view of the Church defined exclusively as "a local body of baptized believers."

Criswell's ecumenical openness, however tentative, presaged and in some measure precipitated the major realignment that has brought Southern Baptists and Catholics together on a host of moral issues, the most important of which is the sanctity of human life. It is well to remember that in 1971, two years before *Roe v. Wade*, the Southern Baptist Convention called for the liberalizing and legalizing of abortion. And, as late as March 1980, when the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission met to discuss "Ethical Issues for the Eighties," the keynote speaker was Sarah Weddington, who had successfully argued the case for *Roe v. Wade* before the Supreme Court seven years before. In the twenty-five years since, Southern Baptists have belatedly joined with many other persons of faith, especially Catholics, to protest the pagan disregard for the sanctity of human life. Francis Schaeffer, a sometime student of McIntyre who developed a much more winsome apologetic for the Christian faith than his mentor, was a catalyst in bringing many evangelicals, including Southern Baptists, into the pro-life movement.

An indication of changing attitudes toward Catholics within America's largest Protestant denomination occurred in 1994 when the Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution "On Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics." Referring explicitly to the first Evangelicals and Catholics Together document, this resolution acknowledged that many Catholics and Southern Baptists had found "in recent years a common area of agreement in their concern for the sanctity of human life, their opposition to the spread of pornography in our society, their commitment to traditional family values, their concern for securing the rights of all individuals without respect to differences of religion, race, gender, and class, and many other areas of moral concern." This resolution also acknowledged tenets of the historic Christian faith—an expanded list of fundamentals—that Southern Baptists confessed in common with Catholics, and it stated explicitly: "We recognize that born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ may be found in all Christian denominations," including Catholicism.

If evangelicalism is a renewal movement within historic Christian orthodoxy, then the Baptist heritage is best interpreted as a renewal tradition within the renewal. But this mission cannot be fulfilled within the ramparts of a narrow Baptist exclusivism, the kind advocated by J.R. Graves, the father of Baptist Landmarkism in the nineteenth century, whose primary passion was to wage ceaseless war against error by papists or Protestants, as he put it. W.A. Criswell was no champion of ecumenism. But in his emphasis on the Church as the company of all of the redeemed of all of the ages, together with his willingness to embrace Catholic believers, including the Holy Father, as brothers and sisters in the Lord, he opened a window for Southern Baptist-Catholic engagement that will be hard to close.

At the same time, both *evangelical* and *ecumenical* are still suspect words for many within the wide spectrum of Southern Baptist life. The tension between denominational efficiency and Christian unity evident in the Statement of 1914 continues on both the right and the left. Some conservatives fear that any ecumenical dialogue necessarily involves contamination and compromise. In spirit, they are the descendants of Carl McIntyre rather than Carl Henry. Meanwhile, some of the Baptist moderates are even more fearful. While open to a one-way ecumenism to the left, they still fear those Yankee evangelicals and their spiritual carpetbagging on sacred Southern soil. The fears of such "backwater Baptists" are entirely misplaced. Baptists have two things going for them in the quest for Christian unity: their belief in the Bible, and their commitment to the world mission of the church.

Many factors have contributed to what one scholar has called "this curious ecumenical turn" within the recent history of Catholics and evangelicals, of which Evangelicals and Catholics Together is but one symptom. What accounts for this new situation? At one level, the answer is simple: "It's the *Zeitgeist*, stupid!" Several years ago, I was sitting

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with Geoffrey Wainwright at a theological conference. After listening to a particularly bad presentation, he whispered to me, "Timothy, there are only two kinds of theologians in the world anymore: Those of us who believe in something, and the others, who don't." What Machen described in the 1920s as the abyss between belief and unbelief has become even more pronounced—a true bottomless pit—in the intervening decades, while the gulf separating the Church of Rome from the traditions of the Reformation, while still formidable, is less a barrier today than it was when Billy Graham preached for a Polish pope.

In part this is because of very significant changes that have taken place within the Catholic Church. This is also in part because evangelicals today are reading the early Church Fathers and the Reformers and appropriating aspects of the great tradition that would have been unthinkable even a generation or two ago. There are neglected impulses toward Christian unity latent within the conservative, and even fundamentalist, sector of American evangelicalism: a passionate concern for theological truth-telling, an unflinching allegiance to the holy scriptures, an evangelistic and missionary impulse to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all persons everywhere, an ecclesiological postulate of an invisible church known only to God. The evangelical tradition holds at its best the belief that faithful Christian witness involves caring deeply about one's neighbor—and hence about truth, justice, and love extending beyond the bounds of the meeting house. So, too, the evangelical tradition holds a recognition of God's sovereignty and providential ordering in the affairs of men and nations, which is an antidote to both despair and utopianism.

Will evangelicalism survive its success? This question is seriously debated by serious scholars and the answer has proved elusive. Some see evangelicalism as a fiction, a grand public-relations ploy held together by powerful personalities for several decades but that has now run out of steam. Others claim this is the "Evangelical Moment." Still others call for revisioning, repositioning, and recentering evangelicalism.

But "center" is the wrong image, I think. Especially when center is defined as the middle point on a spectrum, denoting a middle ground between radicals and liberals on the left and reactionaries and conservatives on the right. I want to suggest another image: *core*, from the Latin word for heart. "Evangelical ecumenism" may be an oxymoron, and its theme song might be the country music classic by George Strait, "Let's Fall to Pieces Together." But I suggest that ecumenism is a central portion—a core concern—of the evangelical faith and the evangelical church. Such a vision is rooted in the holy scriptures, in the great tradition, in the deepest insights of the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century, in the renewal impulses of the Spirit-anointed awakenings, and, yes, even the sectarian roots of the movement shaped by the likes of Carl McIntyre, Carl F.H. Henry, and W.A. Criswell. FT

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From Ratzinger to Benedict

Avery Cardinal Dulles

Like his predecessor John Paul II, Benedict XVI was present at all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965. Whereas Karol Wojtyla took part as a bishop, the young Joseph Ratzinger did so as a theological expert. During and after the council he taught successively at the universities of Bonn (1959-1963), Münster (1963-1966), Tübingen (1966-1969), and Regensburg, until he was appointed Archbishop of Munich in 1977. In 1981 he became prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a post he held until the death of John Paul II in April 2005.

In his many publications Ratzinger continued to debate questions that arose during the council and in some cases expressed dissatisfaction with the council's documents. In this respect he differs from Pope John Paul, who consistently praised the council and never (to my knowledge) criticized it. The material conveniently divides into three stages: his participation at the council, his early commentaries on the council's documents, and his later reflections on the reception of the council. And then there are his changing reactions to the four great constitutions: on the liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), on revelation (*Dei Verbum*), on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), and on the Church in the modern world (*Gaudium et Spes*).

At the council, Ratzinger was much sought after as a rising theological star. He worked closely with senior Jesuits, including Karl Rahner, Alois Grillmeier, and Otto Semmelroth, all of whom kept in steady communication with the German bishops. The German Cardinals Josef Frings of Cologne and Julius Döpfner of Munich and Freising, strongly supported by theologian-bishops such as the future Cardinal Hermann Volk, exercised a powerful influence, generally opposing the schemas drawn up by the preparatory commission under the guidance of Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani and Father Sebastian Tromp, S.J.

Late in the first session Ratzinger was named a theological adviser to Cardinal Frings, a position he held until the end of the council. Many of his biographers suspect that he drafted Frings' speech of November 8, 1963, vehemently attacking the procedures of the Holy Office. In combination with other events, this speech undoubtedly influenced Paul VI to restructure the Holy Office and give it a new name, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

During the first session, several official schemas were distributed by the preparatory commission with the expectation that the council fathers would accept them, at least in revised form. The German contingent were generally content with the proposed document on the liturgy, but reacted adversely to those on revelation and the Church and sought to replace them.

With regard to revelation, Ratzinger agreed that the preliminary schema was unacceptable and should be withdrawn. At the request of Cardinal Frings, he wrote an alternative text, which was then reworked with the help of Rahner. To the annoyance of Ottaviani, three thousand copies of this text were privately circulated among the council fathers and experts. Yves Congar, though generally sympathetic, called the Rahner-Ratzinger paper far too personal to have any chance of being adopted and criticized it for taking too little account of the good work in the preparatory schemas. Gerald Fogarty calls it a barely mitigated synthesis of Rahner's systematic theology.

Notwithstanding the rejection of their schema, Rahner and Ratzinger had some input into the new text

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prepared by the mixed commission named by Pope John XXIII. Both were appointed as consulters to the subcommission revising the new text. Rahner strongly advocated his personal position on the relation between scripture and tradition. Ratzinger helped in responding to proposed amendments to the chapter dealing with tradition; he also had an opportunity to introduce modifications in the chapter dealing with the authority and interpretation of scripture.

On the Church, Ratzinger joined with the German bishops and his fellow experts in getting the idea of the Church as sacrament deeply inscribed into the constitution—a concern to which Frings spoke on the council floor. Both Ratzinger and Rahner served on the subcommission that revised the formulations on collegiality in articles 22 and 23. Ratzinger was also appointed to a team for redrafting the schema on the Church's missionary activity for the last session of the council. He worked closely with Congar in defining the theological foundation of missions, a theme on which the two easily found agreement. Congar in his diary characterizes Ratzinger as "reasonable, modest, disinterested, and very helpful." He credits Ratzinger with coming up with the definition of missionary activity that was accepted and also with proposing the inclusion of a section on ecumenism in the document. Others credit him with devising a footnote that allowed Latin America to be included as a missionary region even though its people had been previously evangelized. At discussions of *Gaudium et Spes* in September 1965, Ratzinger voiced many of the criticisms that would later appear in his books and articles: The schema was too naturalistic and unhistorical, took insufficient notice of sin and its consequences, and was too optimistic about human progress.

All in all, we may say that Ratzinger belonged to the inner circle of theologians whose thinking prevailed at Vatican II. Still in his thirties, he as yet lacked the public standing of Congar, Rahner, and Gérard Philips. In the early sessions he collaborated very closely with Rahner and the German Jesuits in opposition to the Roman School, though he spoke with moderation. As the council progressed, Ratzinger became more independent. He made an original and important contribution to the document on missions and mounted a highly personal critique of the pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, reflecting his preference for Augustine over Aquinas and his sensitivity to Lutheran concerns.

During the council and the first few years after its conclusion, Ratzinger wrote a number of commentaries on the conciliar documents. While making certain criticisms, they express his agreement with the general directions of Vatican II and his acceptance of the three objectives named by John XXIII: renewal of the Church, unity among Christians, and dialogue with the world of today. He welcomed the rejection of some of the preparatory schemas, chiefly because they were phrased in abstract scholastic terms and failed to speak pastorally to the modern world. He appreciated the council's freedom from Roman domination and the openness and candor of its discussions.

As a member of the progressive wing at the council, Ratzinger taught at Tübingen with Hans Küng and joined the editorial board of the progressive review *Concilium*, edited from Holland. In 1969, after the academic uprisings at Tübingen, he moved to the more traditional faculty of Regensburg. Then in 1972 he became one of the founding editors of the review *Communio*, a more conservative counterpart of *Concilium*. His theological orientation seemed to be shifting.

In 1975 Ratzinger wrote an article, on the tenth anniversary of the close of Vatican II, in which he differed from the progressives who wanted to go beyond the council and from the conservatives who wanted to retreat behind the council. The only viable course, he contended, was to interpret Vatican II in strictest continuity with previous councils such as Trent and Vatican I, since all three councils are upheld by the same authority: that of the pope and the college of bishops in communion with him.

Two years later Ratzinger became an archbishop and a cardinal, and then in 1981 cardinal prefect of the Congregation of the Faith. In an interview published in 1985 he denied that Vatican II was responsible for causing the confusion of the post-conciliar period. The damage, he said, was due to the unleashing of polemical and centrifugal forces within the Church and the prevalence, outside the Church, of a liberal-radical ideology that was individualistic, rationalistic, and hedonistic. He renewed his call for fidelity to the actual teaching of the council without reservations that would truncate its teaching or elaborations that would deform it.

The misinterpretations, according to Ratzinger, must be overcome before an authentic reception can begin. Traditionalists and progressives, he said, fell into the same error: They failed to see that Vatican II stood in fundamental continuity with the past. In rejecting some of the early drafts, the council fathers were not repudiating their doctrine, which was solidly traditional, but only their style, which they found too scholastic and insufficiently pastoral. Particularly harmful was the tendency of progressives to contrast the letter of the council's texts with the spirit. The spirit is to be found in the letter itself.

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Some consider that the pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, composed in the final phase, should be seen as the climax of the council, for which the other constitutions are preparatory. Ratzinger takes the opposite view. The pastoral constitution is subordinate to the two dogmatic constitutions—those on revelation and the Church—which orient the interpreter toward the source and center of the Christian life. The constitution on the liturgy, though not strictly dogmatic, was the most successful of the four constitutions; the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* was a tentative effort to apply Catholic doctrine to the current relation of the Church to the world.

The first document debated in the session of 1962 was on liturgy. In his early commentaries Ratzinger praises it highly. He applauds its efforts to overcome the isolation of the priest celebrant and to foster active participation by the congregation. He agrees with the constitution on the need to attach greater importance to the word of God in Scripture and in proclamation. He is pleased by the constitution's provision for Holy Communion to be distributed under both species and its encouragement of regional adaptations regulated by episcopal conferences, including the use of the vernacular. "The wall of Latinity," he wrote, "had to be breached if the liturgy were again to function either as proclamation or as invitation to prayer." He also approved of the council's call to recover the simplicity of the early liturgies and remove superfluous medieval accretions.

In subsequent writings as a cardinal, Ratzinger seeks to dispel current misinterpretations. The council fathers, he insists, had no intention of initiating a liturgical revolution. They intended to introduce a moderate use of the vernacular alongside of the Latin, but had no thought of eliminating Latin, which remains the official language of the Roman rite. In calling for active participation, the council did not mean incessant commotion of speaking, singing, reading, and shaking hands; prayerful silence could be an especially deep manner of personal participation. He particularly regrets the disappearance of traditional sacred music, contrary to the intention of the council. Nor did the council wish to initiate a period of feverish liturgical experimentation and creativity. It strictly forbade both priests and laity to change the rubrics on their own authority.

Ratzinger in several places laments the abruptness with which the Missal of Paul VI was imposed after the council, with its summary suppression of the so-called Tridentine Mass. This action contributed to the impression, all too widespread, that the council was a breach rather than a new stage in a continuous process of development. For his part, Ratzinger seems to have nothing against the celebration of Mass according to the missal that was in use before the council.

In his earliest comments on the constitution on divine revelation, the young Ratzinger spoke positively. The first sentence appealed to him because it placed the Church in a posture of reverently listening to the Word of God. He also welcomed the council's effort to overcome the neurotic anti-Modernism of the neoscholastics and to adopt the language of scripture and contemporary usage. He was pleased with the council's recognition of the process by which scripture grows out of the religious history of God's people.

In his chapters on *Dei Verbum* for the "Vorgrimler Commentary," Ratzinger again praises the preface as opening the Church upward to the Word of God and for emphasizing the value of proclamation. While continuing to note the success of the first chapter in emphasizing revelation through history, he faults its survey of Old Testament history for excessive optimism and for overlooking the prevalence of sin. Some attention to the Lutheran theme of law and gospel, he remarks, would have enriched the text. The theology of faith in the constitution, in his estimation, is consonant with, yet richer than, that of Vatican I. Ratzinger's discussion of tradition in chapter 2 shows a keen appreciation of the difficulties raised by Protestant commentators. He interprets this chapter as giving a certain priority to scripture over tradition and praises it for subordinating the Church's teaching office to the Word of God. But he faults it for failing to recognize scripture as a norm for identifying unauthentic traditions that distort the gospel.

The elder Ratzinger speaks from a different perspective, more confessionally Catholic. While still regarding the constitution on divine revelation as one of the outstanding texts of the council, he holds that it has yet to be truly received. In the prevalent interpretations he finds two principal defects. In the first place, it is misread as though it taught that all revelation is contained in scripture. Ratzinger now makes the point that revelation, as a living reality, is incapable of being enclosed in a text. Tradition is "that part of revelation that goes above and beyond scripture and cannot be comprehended within a code of formulas."

The neglect of living tradition, according to the cardinal prefect, was one of the most serious errors of post-conciliar exegesis. The other was the reduction of exegesis to the historical-critical method. In an article about contemporary biblical interpretation, he comments on the seeming impasse between exegetes and dogmatic theologians. Offering a way out of the dilemma, the council teaches that historical-critical method is only the first stage of exegesis. It helps to illuminate the

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text on the human and historical level, but to find the word of God the exegete must go further, drawing on the Bible as a whole, on tradition, and on the whole system of Catholic dogma. "I am personally persuaded," he writes, "that a careful reading of the whole text of *Dei Verbum* can provide the essential elements of a synthesis between historical method and theological hermeneutics." But unfortunately the post-conciliar reception has practically discarded the theological part of the council's statement as a concession to the past, thus allowing Catholic exegesis to become almost undistinguishable from Protestant.

In combination with the virtual monopoly of historical-critical exegesis, the neglect of tradition leads many Christians to think that nothing can be taught in the Church that does not pass the scrutiny of historical-critical method. In practice this meant that the shifting hypotheses of exegetes became the highest doctrinal authority in the Church.

Over the years Ratzinger has had a great deal to say about the dogmatic constitution on the Church. In his earliest observations he contends that it did well to subordinate the image of Mystical Body to that of People of God. The Mystical Body paradigm, much in favor under Pius XII, makes it all but impossible to give any ecclesial status to non-Catholics and leads to a false identification of the Church with Christ her Lord. The image of People of God, he contends, is more biblical; it gives scope for recognizing the sins of the Church, and it indicates that the Church is still on pilgrimage under the sign of hope. For similar reasons he supports the theme of Church as sacrament. As a sign and instrument, the Church is oriented to a goal that lies beyond herself.

In his early commentaries Ratzinger shows special interest in episcopal collegiality. The apostles, he believes, constituted a stable group under Peter as their head, as do the bishops of later generations under the primacy of Peter's successor. Collegiality, in his view, favors horizontal communication among bishops. Behind collegiality lies the vision of the Church as made up of relatively autonomous communities under their respective bishops. The rediscovery of the local church makes it clear that multiplicity belongs to the structure of the Church. According to the New Testament, Ratzinger observes, the Church is a communion of local churches, mutually joined together through the Body and the Word of the Lord, especially when gathered at the Eucharist. Bishops, as heads of particular churches, must collaborate with one another in a ministry that is essentially communal. Not all initiative has to rest with the pope alone; he may simply accept what the body of bishops or some portion of it decrees.

Ratzinger was less upset than some of his fellow theologians by the "Prefatory Note of Explanation" appended to the third chapter of *Lumen Gentium* to clarify the doctrine of collegiality. This note supplied a number of necessary elucidations, even while tipping the scales somewhat in favor of papal primacy. Its importance should not be exaggerated, because it is neither a conciliar document nor one signed by the pope. Although the pope evidently approved of it, it was signed only by the secretary general of the council.

Ratzinger at this stage of his career contended that the synod of bishops established by Paul VI in September 1965 is in some respects collegial. The majority of the members are elected by the bishops, and it is called a synod, a term evoking the structures of the ancient Church. The synod, he said, is "a permanent council in miniature." He likewise characterizes episcopal conferences as quasi-synodal intermediate agencies between individual bishops and the pope, possessing legislative powers in their own right. Writing for *Concilium* in 1965, he called the conferences partial realizations of collegiality and asserted that they have a genuinely theological basis.

At Vatican II there was a division of opinion about whether or not to treat Mariology in a separate document. With the general body of German theologians, Ratzinger supported the inclusion of Mary in the constitution on the Church, as finally took place. Unlike Bishop Wojtyla, he was wary of Marian maximalism and apparently averse to new titles such as "Mother of the Church." Moved partly by ecumenical considerations, he applauded the restraint of the council in its references to Mary as Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix.

Ratzinger in these early commentaries praised the constitution on the Church for its ecumenical sensitivity. It overcomes the impression that non-Catholic Christians are connected to the Church only by some kind of implicit desire, as Pius XII had seemed to teach. Read in conjunction with the decree on ecumenism, *Lumen Gentium* gives positive ecclesial status to Protestant and Orthodox communities. For Ratzinger, *the* Church is Catholic, but it is possible for particular churches or ecclesial communities to exist irregularly outside her borders. Some, such as the Eastern Orthodox communities, deserve to be called churches in the theological sense of the word.

Throughout his later career Ratzinger has continued to write extensively on the issues raised by Vatican II's constitution on the Church. He frequently returns to the theme of the Church as People of God, which had been a topic in his doctoral dissertation. In calling the Church by that title, he now says, the council was not using the term "people" in a sociological sense. From an empirical point of view, Christians are not a

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people, as may be shown from any sociological analysis. But the non-people of Christians can become the people of God through inclusion in Christ, by sacramental incorporation into his crucified and risen body. In other words, the Church is the People of God because it is, in Christ, a sacrament. Here, too, we must note a serious failure of reception: Since the council, "the idea of the Church as sacrament has hardly entered people's awareness."

Ratzinger is not opposed to the ecclesiology of communion that came to the fore at the 1985 synod on the interpretation of Vatican II. Thanks to the Eucharist, the Church is communion with the whole Body of Christ. But he notes that "communion" has become, in some measure, a buzz word, and it is frequently distorted by a unilateral emphasis on the horizontal dimension to the neglect of the divine. Indeed, it is also misused to promote a kind of egalitarianism within the Church.

The early Ratzinger attached great importance to the council's retrieval of the theology of the local church. Since 1992, however, he has contended that the universal Church has ontological and historical priority over the particular churches. It was not originally made up of local or regional churches. Those who speak of the priority of the particular church over the universal, he says, misinterpret the council documents. On collegiality, the older Ratzinger points out that according to Vatican II the bishop is first of all a member of the college, which is by nature universal. He is a successor of the apostles, each of whom, with and under Peter, was co-responsible for the universal Church. Bishops who are assigned to dioceses participate in the direction of the universal Church by governing their own churches well, keeping them in communion with the Church Catholic. The synod of bishops, in Ratzinger's later theology, is no longer seen as a collegial organ or as a council in miniature; it is advisory to the pope as he performs his task. In so doing it makes the voice of the universal Church more clearly audible in the world of our day.

A similar shift is apparent in Ratzinger's view of episcopal conferences, which he had earlier characterized as collegial organs with a true theological basis. But by 1986 he says: "We must not forget that the episcopal conferences have no theological basis; they do not belong to the structure of the Church as willed by Christ, that cannot be eliminated; they have only a practical, concrete function." It is difficult to deny that on episcopal conferences, as on the synod of bishops, the cardinal retracted his earlier positions.

One of the most contentious issues in the interpretation of *Lumen Gentium* is the meaning of the statement that the Church of Christ "subsists in" the Roman Catholic Church. Some have interpreted it as an admission that the Church of Christ is found in many denominational churches, none of which can claim to be the one true Church. Ratzinger asserts the opposite. For him, "subsists" implies integral existence as a complete, self-contained subject. Thus the Catholic Church truly is the Church of Christ. But the term "subsists" is not exclusive; it allows for the possibility of ecclesial entities that are institutionally separate from the one Church. This dividedness, however, is not a desirable mutual complementarity of incomplete realizations but a deficiency that calls for healing.

In the sphere of Mariology, Ratzinger laments what he sees as another misunderstanding of the council. The inclusion of a chapter on Mary as the culmination of the constitution on the Church, he believes, should have given rise to new research rather than to neglect of the mystery of Mary. He himself has overcome certain reservations about Marian titles that he had expressed at the time of the council. It is imperative to turn to Mary, he believes, in order to learn the truth about Jesus Christ that is to be proclaimed.

The pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* in final form was primarily the work of French theologians. The German group did not control the text. At the time of the council Ratzinger already noted many difficulties, beginning with the problem of language. In opting for the language of modernity the text inevitably places itself outside the world of the Bible, so that as a result the biblical citations come to be little more than ornamental. Because of its stated preference for dialogue, the constitution makes faith appear not as an urgent demand for total commitment but as a conversational search into obscure matters. Christ is mentioned only at the end of each section, almost as an afterthought.

Instead of replacing dogmatic utterances with dialogue, Ratzinger contends, it would have been better to use the language of proclamation, appealing to the intrinsic authority of God's truth. The constitution, drawing on the thought of Teilhard de Chardin, links Christian hope too closely to the modern idea of progress. Material progress is ambivalent because it can lead to degradation as well as to true humanization. The Cross teaches us that the world is not redeemed by technological advances but by sacrificial love. In the section on unification, *Gaudium et Spes* approaches the world too much from the viewpoint of function and utility rather than that of contemplation and wonder.

Ratzinger's commentary on the first chapter of *Gaudium et Spes* contains still other provocative comments. The treatment of conscience in article 16, in his view, raises many unsolved questions about how con-

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science can err and about the right to follow an erroneous conscience. The treatment of free will in article 17 is in his judgment "downright Pelagian." It leaves aside, he complains, the whole complex of problems that Luther handled under the term "*servum arbitrium*," although Luther's position does not itself do justice to the New Testament.

Ratzinger is not wholly negative in his judgment. He praises the discussion of atheism in articles 19-21 as "balanced and well-founded." He is satisfied that the document, while "reprobating" atheism in all its forms, makes no specific mention of Marxist communism, as some cold warriors had desired. He is enthusiastic about the centrality of Christ and the Paschal mystery in article 22, and he finds in it a statement on the possibilities of salvation of the unevangelized far superior to the "extremely unsatisfactory" expressions of *Lumen Gentium* 16, which seemed to suggest that salvation is a human achievement rather than a divine gift.

With regard to this constitution, the later Ratzinger does not seem to have withdrawn his early objections, notwithstanding his exhortations to accept the entire teaching of Vatican II. But he finds that the ambiguities of *Gaudium et Spes* have been aggravated by secularist interpretations. The council was right, Ratzinger maintains, in its desire for a revision of the relations between the Church and the world. There are values that, having originated outside the Church, can find their place, at least in corrected form, within the Church. But the Church and the world can never meet each other without conflict. Worldly theologies too easily assimilate the gospel to secular movements.

In scattered references here and there in his interviews, Ratzinger mentions at least three specific deviations in the interpretations.

In the first place, *Gaudium et Spes* did make reference to signs of the times, but it stated that they need to be discerned and judged in the light of the gospel. Contemporary interpreters treat the signs of the times as a new method that finds theological truth in current events and makes them normative for judging the testimony of Scripture and tradition.

Secondly, the pastoral constitution may have erred in the direction of optimism, but it did speak openly of sin and evil. In no less than five places it made explicit mention of Satan. Post-conciliar interpreters, however, are inclined to discount Satan as a primitive myth.

Finally, *Gaudium et Spes* refers frequently to the Kingdom of God. Enthusiastic readers prefer to speak simply of the kingdom (without reference to any king) or, even more vaguely, to the "values" of the kingdom: peace, justice, and conservation. Can this trio of values, asks Ratzinger, take the place of God? Values, he replies, cannot replace truth, nor can they replace God, for they are only a reflection of him. Without God, the values become distorted by inhuman ideologies, as has been seen in various forms of Marxism.

Undeniably there have been some shifts in Ratzinger's assessment of Vatican II. Still finding his own theological path, he was in the first years of the council unduly dependent on Karl Rahner as a mentor. Only gradually did he come to see that he and Rahner lived, theologically speaking, on different planets. Whereas Rahner found revelation and salvation primarily in the inward movements of the human spirit, Ratzinger finds them in historical events attested by scripture and the early church fathers.

Ratzinger's career appears to have affected his theology. As an archbishop and a cardinal he has had to take increasing responsibility for the public life of the Church and has gained a deeper realization of the need for universal sacramental structures to safeguard the unity of the Church and her fidelity to the gospel. He has also had to contend with interpretations of Vatican II that he and the council fathers never foresaw. His early hopes for new mechanisms such as episcopal conferences have been tempered by the course of events.

Notwithstanding the changes, Benedict XVI has shown a fundamental consistency. As a personalist in philosophy and as a theologian in the Augustinian tradition, he expects the Church to maintain a posture of prayer and worship. He is suspicious of technology, of social activism, and of human claims to be building the Kingdom of God. For this reason he most appreciates the council documents on the liturgy and revelation, and has reservations about the constitution on the Church in the modern world, while giving it credit for some solid achievements.

The contrast between Pope Benedict and his predecessor is striking. John Paul II was a social ethicist, anxious to involve the Church in shaping a world order of peace, justice, and fraternal love. Among the documents of Vatican II, John Paul's favorite was surely the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. Benedict XVI, who looks upon *Gaudium et Spes* as the weakest of the four constitutions, shows a clear preference for the other three.

Although the Polish philosopher and the German theologian differ in outlook, they agree that the council has been seriously misinterpreted. It needs to be understood in conformity with the constant teaching of the Church. The true spirit of the council is to be found in, and not apart from, the letter. FT

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The Miracle of Evolution

Stephen M. Barr

There are two fundamentally different battles raging in the current debates about evolution. The first pits nearly the entire scientific community against creationists, who believe that they are upholding the veracity of Scripture by denying that evolution happened at all.

The second battle concerns not the *fact* of evolution but the standard neo-Darwinian *explanation* of it, and the issues at stake are primarily philosophical and scientific. Leading the charge in this second fight is the Intelligent Design movement. Its main thesis holds that natural mechanisms are insufficient to account for all the complexity seen in the biological world. The Intelligent Design theorists therefore argue that the existence of an intelligent designer can be scientifically demonstrated. Sometimes they say that such a demonstration already exists; at other times, they demand merely that the "design hypothesis" be placed alongside neo-Darwinism as an alternative scientific theory deserving of further research, grant funding, and space in textbooks.

Unfortunately, the two battles get mixed up. In part, this is due to the apparent determination of some defenders of neo-Darwinism to be unfair to their opponents. It is often said, for example, that the Intelligent Design movement is, in spite of much evidence to the contrary, simply a re-tooling or repackaging of "creation science." Meanwhile, there is a widespread suspicion that the movement masks "creationists": people using the movement as a Trojan horse to advance their agenda. And there are facts that give color to the suspicion. Some Intelligent Design writing (such as Phillip Johnson's) places great emphasis on gaps in the fossil record and other stock arguments against common descent. And when Pope John Paul II spoke of evolution as "more than a hypothesis" in 1996, some supporters of the Intelligent Design movement at first sought to explain it as a translation error. That reaction suggested discomfort with the entire idea of common descent, since the pope had neither endorsed any particular mechanism of evolution nor approved any of the metaphysical errors commonly committed in the name of neo-Darwinism—indeed he warned against them.

The second battle could have been avoided had there been more good will and intellectual humility on the part of scientists. We would all be better off if more scientists simply admitted that there are things we don't understand about the hows and whys of evolution. What we have seen instead is an intolerance of any questioning on this subject that is totally inconsistent with a true scientific spirit.

Moreover, the scientific community has sat by while certain scientists and philosophers, claiming the authority of science, have waged war against religion using the neo-Darwinian account of evolution as a metaphysical weapon. There have been three main prongs of this offensive. The first is the promotion of an extreme form of naturalism and reductionism, sometimes called "scientism." According to this philosophy (a hang-over from positivism, and widespread among scientists), all objectively meaningful questions can be reduced to scientific ones, and only natural explanations are rational.

The second prong is an attack on the idea of design in nature: Biologists like Richard Dawkins and philosophers like Daniel Dennett claim Darwinian evolution has explained how complex biological struc-

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tures arise from unconscious physical processes and thus destroyed the Argument from Design for the existence of God, conquered the last bastion of teleology and final causation in science, and showed that the universe and life are without ultimate purpose.

The third prong is an assault on the religious conception of man. In the words of the late Stephen Jay Gould, man has been "dethroned." There is no "ontological discontinuity" (as the late pope called it) between man and the lower animals. We are simply the products of an evolutionary process, and therefore moral concepts based on religion or Natural Law must give way to "evolutionary ethics" and sociobiology. All three elements in this anti-religious agenda have not only been promoted in popular science writing and documentaries, but have seeped into high-school biology textbooks and even, on occasion, technical journals.

Of course, none of these attacks on religion has any scientific status. None is a proposition within any actual scientific theory. The proper—and ultimately most effective—response is (as I have written before) to distinguish sharply the actual hypotheses of legitimate science from the philosophical errors often mistakenly thought to follow from them. We must draw as clear a line as possible between science and philosophy—not to elevate science above philosophy, but to restore science to its proper "metaphysically modest" role, to use the fine phrase Cardinal Schönborn employed in FIRST THINGS last month, replying to criticisms I had made of his earlier writing on evolution.

This metaphysical modesty means not allowing philosophical systems to masquerade as science. In the case of neo-Darwinism, we must start with what it really asserts *as science*, stripping away all the philosophical meanings that such people as Dawkins, Dennett, Futuyma, Watson, and Crick claim to find in it—as, indeed, do some religious people, who on that account feel compelled to reject it. Indeed, there are people who read these meanings into modern science as a whole, as Cardinal Schönborn appears to do when he refers at one point to the "reductive claims of modern science (which is to say positivism)."

In itself, neo-Darwinism is merely a theory of how biological structure forms. Consider a simple example from the less-contentious field of physics. If we saw ten balls rolling around on a pool table, we wouldn't expect them to come to rest in an exactly triangular array. That would require their motions to be precisely correlated in a highly improbable way. Thus, when we do see a triangular array of pool balls, we reasonably conclude they were arranged by hand. By contrast, molecules in a sufficiently cooled liquid form themselves into precise arrays called crystals. And we know it is *not* necessary for molecules to move in a special way for this crystallization to occur. (Indeed, one can simulate crystallization on a computer, with the initial movements of the molecules being chosen by a randomizing procedure.)

Another instructive case is the formation of the solar system, which scientists believe condensed from a cloud of gas and dust. The solar system exhibits a high degree of regularity: For example, the planets all orbit the Sun in very nearly in the same plane and in the same direction. Did the particles in the original cloud have to be moving in a special, highly correlated way to end up with such an orderly result? No. One can show that a swirling cloud of gravitating particles will tend, as it radiates its heat, to form a flat, rotating disk and ultimately a planetary system.

These examples seem to suggest that the orderliness we observe in nature—which since ancient times has been seen as evidence for a cosmic designer—can arise spontaneously from mere chaos. That conclusion, however, is superficial. A careful analysis of all such examples from physics reveals that the orderly structures found in *things* (such as the solar system or crystals) are manifestations of a more profound and impressive orderliness at the level of fundamental *laws*. For example, the three marvelous patterns of planetary motion discovered by Kepler were later explained by Newton using his laws of motion and gravity. Far from explaining away the orderliness Kepler discovered, Newton showed that the Keplerian patterns were an outcropping of a much grander, more pervasive, and more beautiful order.

That is how all scientific explanation works: Order at one level is explained as a consequence of greater order at a deeper level. The world looks not less orderly now than it did to the ancients. Rather, the deeper physicists have penetrated into the inner workings of the world, the more they have uncovered mathematical harmony of a richness, subtlety, intricacy, and profundity that can only be called sublime.

Moreover, even though physics provides us with naturalistic accounts of the formation of stars, planets, and solar systems based on impersonal laws and blind chance (in the narrow sense that the motions of the primordial gas and dust particles could be statistically random), nonetheless human reason can discern both Providence and purposeful design in their formation. For if there is to be life in the universe, it certainly helps that there exist planets as a habitat for it and stars like the Sun to provide energy for it, and that the planets can orbit the stars in a stable

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way. And all of these things depend on numerous features of the laws of physics being just as they are.

To give just two examples: If the force of gravity did not depend on distance as the inverse square, but as some other power, then planets would not be able to orbit stars at all. And if the laws of nuclear physics did not have certain precisely "tuned" features, stars like the Sun would not burn in the slow and steady way they do, which gives life time to evolve. The Argument from Design has been enormously strengthened by discoveries in physics and cosmology, whatever bruises it is supposed to have taken from Darwin.

In biology we see structure of a different type. The structure of crystals or the solar system is based on mathematical rules, while no formula tells us how an animal is put together. Rather, *organic* structure is characterized by complexity and functional interdependence of parts. Neo-Darwinism proposes a natural mechanism for producing complex organic structure. The claim is that this mechanism works even if the genetic mutations that fuel it are statistically random. While the kinds of structure are different in physics and biology, the concept of "randomness" is the same in both.

Cardinal Schönborn asserts that "the randomness of neo-Darwinian biology is nothing like" that in other branches of science, where there is a "deeply mathematical and precise conceptual structure." But starting with Gregor Mendel, a great deal of precise mathematical analysis using statistical concepts *has* been done in biology and forms part of the foundations of neo-Darwinism. It is no argument against the putative randomness of genetic variations to say, as Cardinal Schönborn does, that they were of "exactly the sort" needed to bring about plants and animals. That begs the question, by assuming that a special sort is needed to make plants or animals. Just as no special sort of molecular motion is needed to make crystals, but random ones will do, so also it may be that natural selection can work with genetic mutations that are statistically random.

The question for science is whether the neo-Darwinian account of evolution is sufficient to explain all instances of biological complexity. Many scientists are supremely confident that it is—which is strange, given that so little is known about the steps by which some complex structures actually evolved.

With almost equal assurance, Intelligent Design theorists maintain the opposite opinion. They argue that there are certain biological structures that can arise neither in a single big step, which would be prohibitively improbable, nor by a series of little steps, since these structures are "irreducibly complex." ("Irreducible" here means that every element of the structure must be in place for it to function at all. Michael Behe uses the analogy of a mousetrap, which can't catch any mice until all the parts are there.) The trouble is that appearances of irreducibility can be deceptive. A free-standing Roman arch may look irreducible in the Behean sense, since the removal of any one brick will cause it to collapse. Nonetheless, it *can* be constructed in a series of little steps by building a wall, one brick at a time, and then knocking a hole in it. A seemingly impossible feat can look simple once we learn the trick. And we simply don't know all of nature's tricks, a lesson that both neo-Darwinians and Intelligent Design enthusiasts should take to heart.

The neo-Darwinian mechanism is one of trial and error, and we know that trial and error can achieve impressive results if enough trials are allowed—or, in Intelligent Design theorist William Dembski's terminology, if there are enough "probabilistic resources." The question of the adequacy of neo-Darwinism, then, is ultimately one of numbers—which means that it can be resolved only by detailed calculations, not by aprioristic arguments or philosophical reflection however deep. And, unlike the case of crystals or planetary systems, nobody can do those calculations at present, because not enough is known about evolutionary history. Nor can theology resolve it, since God could certainly create, if He wished, a universe in which the "probabilistic resources" were large enough for Darwinism to work. Whether we live in such a universe is an empirical question.

The Intelligent Design movement's "design hypothesis" is not a scientific one if we understand natural science to have its traditional, "metaphysically modest" goal of understanding the "natural order" of the world. This isn't to deny that events happen which go beyond the natural order. It is only to say that they lie outside the purview of natural science. For instance, while scientific evidence might lead us to conclude that a cancer cure at Lourdes is miraculous, that is not an advance in oncology. And if empirical evidence shows that a person turned water into wine, that is not a new "water-wine effect" in chemistry.

Perhaps to maintain the natural-scientific character of their "design hypothesis," such Intelligent Design writers as Behe and Dembski suggest that, as far as their arguments go, the intelligent designer might even be a race of space aliens. But since such beings would doubtless be as biologically complex as we, the only way to avoid an infinite regress of space aliens is to say that the "design hypothesis" involves an agent who is outside the natural order. The Intelligent Design move-

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ment is absolutely right to insist that biology textbooks be honest and admit that, for all we know, natural mechanisms may not be enough to explain evolution. There exist legitimate reasons, however, to resist the idea that the "design hypothesis" is an alternative scientific theory. God is not a scientific theory.

Let us suppose that the scientific claims of neo-Darwinism are correct. What baleful philosophical implications would this have? Absolutely none, as far as I can see. Some people are concerned about "naturalism." But if one is happy with natural explanations of the formation of stars and planetary systems, why not of plants and animals? All natural explanations obviously presuppose a natural order that is lawful, and that order or lawfulness points to a God as the architect of it. As many authors have convincingly argued—including Henderson in *Fitness of the Environment* (1913), Barrow and Tipler in *The Cosmological Anthropic Principle* (1986), and Denton in *Nature's Destiny* (1998)—the evolution of life by natural processes requires that the laws of nature be very special indeed, and in many ways. Why, then, is it philosophically important to maintain that the molecular motions or genetic mutations had to be special as well?

Some say Darwinism undercuts the Argument from Design. They are wrong. It may be "a design-defeating hypothesis," as Cardinal Schönborn says, but only in the sense that it defeats *some* design arguments, not all. And some design arguments deserve to be defeated. For example, Newton believed that the mutual gravitation of the planets would cause their orbits to wobble increasingly, like a top that is running down, and that God had to intervene periodically to readjust them. But Laplace showed by a famous calculation that the solar system is self-stabilizing. It would be wonderful if there were convenient scientific proofs of God's activity in nature of the kind proposed by Newton and the Intelligent Design movement. But God doesn't always sign His work. Human reason, unaided by faith, can indeed see convincing evidence of design, Providence, and purpose in nature, but that does not make valid every purported scientific demonstration that God has acted in this specific place or that. And it is deplorable that God's title of "Intelligent Designer" is now widely seen as depending on highly disputable claims about the mechanics of evolution.

And what happens to morality and natural-law ethics if neo-Darwinism is right? Nothing, if we recognize that man is not *merely* a product of evolution. Man is not reducible to matter, not only as Scripture and tradition attest, but also as human reason can discern by reflecting upon its own powers. Therefore any attempt to account for man and morality in purely biological terms must be a caricature. Perhaps our "ontological discontinuity" with the rest of nature can be thought of in this way: We are like three-dimensional beings in a two-dimensional world. Thus, a biological account of man, like the projection of a solid figure onto a flat screen, gets some things right while distorting others. And yet, if we recognize it as a projection, we will not be misled.

An old scholastic axiom holds that grace perfects nature without destroying it. In a somewhat analogous way, we can say that the spiritual in man builds upon the biological but is not reducible to it. Evolutionary biology might well be able to explain the capacity of some animals to sacrifice lesser goods for greater ones (say, their own comfort for their offsprings' lives). But while man does this too, he is able to do it on an ontologically higher plane, since he can choose not only goods that are known by instinct or sensation but ones that are known through reason, and he can choose them freely. We may see in the biological realm, then, adumbrations of, and indeed the groundwork for, spiritual things, without succumbing to a merely naturalistic view of man.

If biology remains only biology, it is not to be feared. Much of the fear that does exist is rooted in the notion that God is in competition with nature, so that the more we attribute to one the less we can attribute to the other. That is false. The greater the powers and potentialities in nature, the more magnificent must be nature's far-sighted Author, that God whose "ways are unsearchable" and who "reaches from end to end ordering all things mightily." Richard Dawkins famously called the universe "a blind watchmaker." If it is, it is miracle enough for anyone; for it is incomparably greater to design a watchmaker than a watch. We need not pit evolution against design, if we recognize that evolution is part of God's design. FT

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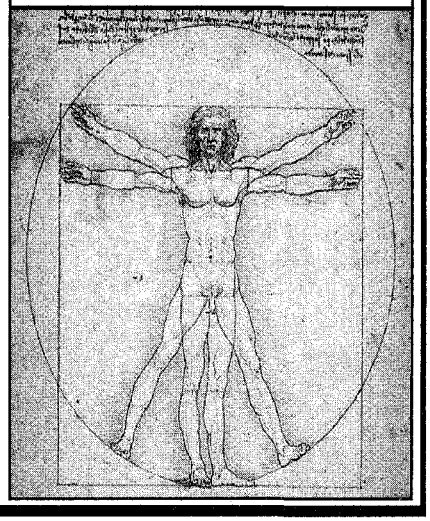

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Books in Review

With Friends Like These

God, Truth, and Witness: Essays in Conversation with Stanley Hauerwas
edited by L. Gregory Jones, Reinhard Huetter, and C. Rosalee Velloso Ewell
Brazos, 336 pages, $39.99

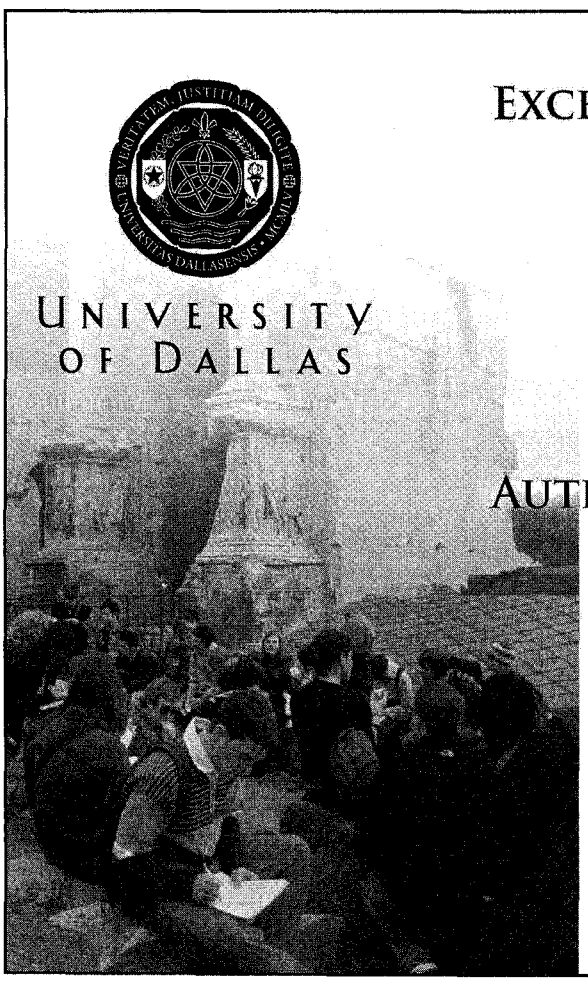
Reviewed by Stephen H. Webb

Brazos Press has become the House of Hauerwas. That is not such a bad thing, given that Stanley's theological mansion contains many rooms. No other contemporary theologian has put his personal touch on so many issues with such persistent creativity. This is not to say Hauerwas' work is a simple matter. His thought is capacious, but his style can be garish and loud. You can check into Hotel Hauerwas any time you like, but he may not let you leave.

Brazos' latest festschrift, *God, Truth, and Witness: Essays in Conversation with Stanley Hauerwas*, is testimony to the remarkable way Hauerwas makes friends by arguing with people. That is an exceedingly rare skill in today's academic climate, where arguments break out like thunderstorms and then are allowed to blow over before they do any lasting damage. Hauerwas grabs you with the power of his thinking and will not let you go until you say why you disagree with him. His prose swaggers on the page, but in person you see the glint in his eyes that tells you to relax and enjoy the argument.

Years ago, liberal theologians outdid themselves in scrambling to write on the topic of metaphor, because it seemed the perfect trope for conveying the piety of moral relativism.

Stephen H. Webb *is professor of religion and philosophy at Wabash College. His recent books include* American Providence, The Divine Voice, Good Eating, *and* Taking Religion to School.



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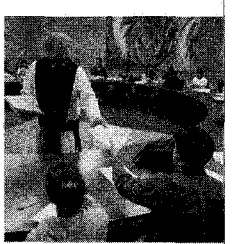

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They called themselves revisionists, because they were inspired by the elasticity of metaphor to replace systematic and historical theology with *constructive* religious thought. Along the way, they converted dogma into poetry and belief into make-believe. They even went so far as to fuse the divine with poetic license, since they took the inexhaustibility of the metaphorical imagination to suggest that God is but another name for the way everything is connected to everything else.

Then along came Hauerwas. His Texas slang ran roughshod over the pretty doodles of the spiritual fashion designers. While those mesmerized by metaphor wanted to picture God anew, Hauerwas struggled to secure the conditions necessary for truthful Christian speech. His voice is hyperbolic rather than metaphorical, stressing differences rather than similarities while imposing clarity on recalcitrant theological topics. I speak from personal experience when I say that many theologians have come to understand what they think about a particular topic only when confronted with a Hauerwasian exaggeration. When Hauerwas is wrong, he is so wrong that he clears the way for forceful restatements of Christian truths.

NOWHERE IS HAUERWAS more wrong than in his understanding of the relation between Christianity and politics, and it takes a very good group of friends to point this out without sounding like they are rejecting everything that makes him so much fun to read. Among the essayists in *God, Truth, and Witness*, Robert Wilken, Robert Jenson, Tristram Engelhardt, and Robert Bellah are at the top of their game, and the hardball they play with Hauerwas is exciting to watch.

Hauerwas often writes as if he were looking for a fight, and who better to pick a fight with than the greatest Christian ruler of all time? Constantine thought of himself as Christianity's best friend, but Hauerwas portrays him as the great bully of the early Church. I can think only that Hauerwas does this because he values friendship so highly, since he writes as if he were personally betrayed by Constantine's ruse. Wilken deftly defends Constantine by shifting attention to St. Ambrose of Milan. Ambrose certainly helped orchestrate the coordination of civic life with the Christian narrative, but this was no plot to Christianize society from above. It was the people of Milan who desperately conspired to turn Christianity into public policy. Ambrose obliged them, but he qualified his cooperation by maintaining appropriate borders around the Church. If the empire had not become Christian, Ambrose could not have been so bold in challenging the emperor.

JENSON TURNS Wilken's story of St. Ambrose into explicit argument. When Constantine cast his lot with the Christians, he asks, "Could charity have refused the empire's call for help?" Jenson's answer is no. He goes on to explain that Christianity has a stake in building culture. The Church is a culture, as is the Trinity, which is the highest conceivable culture. Between the two lie the significant cultural achievements of Western Christian civilization. For much of the history of the West, becoming Christian and becoming civilized were identical processes. Modernity can be defined as a rebellion against God that is lightly disguised as a revolt against high culture. The cultural treasures that the Church has shared with Western civilization may now be defaced, but that does not mean they should be abandoned to the new barbarian hordes of secular relativists. This is no time for the Church to be selfish about its cultural achievements.

Tristram Engelhardt pushes Jenson's argument even further. His essay is the most powerful in the book, because he mimics Hauerwas' style in a playfully aggressive way. Engelhardt is an Orthodox theologian, and he demonstrates just how Western—and Protestant—Hauerwas is. For Eastern Christians, Constantine was both a saint and a great man, and his rule was one of the splendors of the Church. Apostolic Christianity flourished, and freed from persecution, countless men and women were able to pursue a monastic life of total dedication to Christ. The exchange of honors between Christological and imperial titles enabled Christians for the first time to envision the whole universe as filled by the Logos. Christians could recognize Christ as truly Lord of this world, and they could also expect the emperors to be shepherds and peacemakers.

Bellah, the authority on civil religion, also rejects the idea that Constantinianism is foreign to Christian history. He argues that nations are naturally religious, because gods and kings emerged together. When God rescued the Israelites from Egypt, the office of the prophet came between pharaoh and the divine. Nonetheless, even at this early stage of Israel's history, kingship was not entirely absent, since Moses fulfilled many of the tasks of a military commander. Israel was always a nation with the soul of a state. If it is true that the political tends to take a religious shape, then Christians should strive to make their nation-states as Christian as they can.

Civil religion is risky business, but the Christian impulse for social transformation makes some version of it in a democracy like America all but inevitable. This is a point that nowadays is associated with political conservatives. Yet Bellah ends his essay with a tirade against President Bush. He says nothing one could not hear in a faculty dining room at any secular college in America—and along the way, the subtlety of his

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analysis of the interaction between Christianity and democracy vanishes. Contrary to his intentions, he helps me to see how the House of Hauerwas, in order to demythologize the nation-state, is willing to pay the high price of politicizing the Church.

God, Truth, and Witness contains several essays by those who basically agree with Hauerwas, but the man goes down best when he makes you grimace. That is what makes the essay by Hans S. Reinders so brilliant. Reinders returns Hauerwas' gift of friendship by reflecting on the unique challenge of befriending the intellectually disabled. One of Hauerwas' favorite theories is that the modern notion of autonomy fails to make sense of the lives of those who are helplessly dependent on the care of others. To compensate for that failure, he argues, philosophers must produce rational justifications for the care of the disabled, but that implies that the lives of the disabled are not intelligible on their own terms. Only Christianity can account for the dignity of the disabled by demonstrating how dependency, not autonomy, is the truest description of our lives.

THERE ARE MANY problems with this argument, beginning with the question of its status. Is this apologetics, anthropology, or ontology? Though his writings are scattershot with ethical theories about moral agency, Hauerwas is best known for his theories about why ethicists should eschew theories. I guess the most one can say is that it is part of Hauerwas' charm that his rhetoric, which is flagrantly dismissive of all things theoretical, cannot account for his practice of promiscuous theorizing.

When Hauerwas is forced to admit that ethicists sometimes need a theory or two, he insists that theories should emerge strictly from moral practice. Knowing, for Hauerwas, is a practical and relational activity. By implication, as Reinders points out, you cannot write about the handicapped unless you are friends with them, but if you are friends with them, you will not try to justify their existence by showing how they can contribute to a better understanding of Christianity. Yet Hauerwas has done exactly that. "I have used the mentally handicapped," he writes, "as material markers to show that Christian speech can and in fact does make claims about the way things are." If the Christian narrative is suf-

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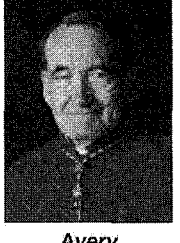
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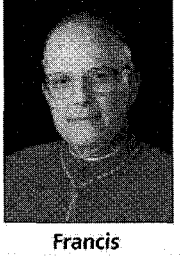
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ficient to nourish practices of compassion, then why do we need this strenuous rational justification? By Hauerwas' own logic, thinking about the disabled is not something you do if you care about them. Hauerwas has backed himself into a corner of his own construction.

Reinders is such a true friend to Hauerwas that he makes these points more gently than I have. He observes how Hauerwas has grown increasingly uncomfortable about writing about the mentally handicapped because his friendship with them is now just a memory. Hauerwas feels bad that he no longer has handicapped friends, but Reinders does not let him off the hook. Any Christian conception of friendship, Reinders argues, must dwell on the inevitable failure of our ability to be true friends—to anyone. Hanging around with the mentally disabled just makes this more obvious.

Reinders tells the story of his own friendship with a mentally disabled person, and he does not gloss over the difficulties. Reinders intends by this story to suggest that Hauerwas has his epistemology all wrong. If you make your theory dependent on your practice, then you are liable to idealize your practice in order to make it fit your theory. Rather than insist that one can theorize about the intellectually disabled only when one is their friend, Hauerwas should recognize that such friendships are valuable precisely because they are so nearly impossible. Theory begins where practices fail, not where they succeed. For Christians, friendship is always incomplete and inadequate, and it is made possible only by the confession of fault.

Most of the essays in *God, Truth, and Witness* are confessions of the risk involved in being a friend of Hauerwas. That makes them theology of a very high order. If Stanley Hauerwas made better arguments, he would not have so many friends.

A Penny for the Guy

God's Secret Agents: Queen Elizabeth's Forbidden Priests and the Hatching of the Gunpowder Plot
by Alice Hogge
HarperCollins, 464 pages, $27.95

Reviewed by Amy Welborn

Within two weeks of his return from Rome in 1586, Father Robert Garnet had been selected to be the superior of the Jesuit mission in England. For twenty years he persisted: traveling, hiding, celebrating the sacraments, and coordinating the movements of his brother priests. By 1606, however, Garnet stood on a scaffold outside St. Paul's cathedral. Refusing to recant, he was hanged—executed for his purported role in the treasonous conspiracy called the Gunpowder Plot.

Although the government had for decades been trying to stir up paranoid fury against Papists in general and Jesuits in particular, the London mob's reaction to Garnet's hanging was not what the royal ministers had hoped. It was reported that the crowd lunged forward and pulled on his legs, hastening his death to minimize suffering. It worked. Garnet died in the hanging, and so was not alive during the usual climax of the execution of Romish priests: drawing and quartering, removing the still-beating heart of the condemned, holding it before his eyes and announcing, "Behold the heart of a traitor!"

All that was done, of course, but as Garnet's fellow Jesuit John Gerard reported, the crowd stayed silent, withholding its usual lusty "God save the King." There was an ambiguity at the heart of England's Catholic problem: Fears that the Catholic Church was ready to overthrow the British monarchy were matched by a desire that England not be known as a country that persecuted its citizens for religious beliefs.

The story of the Gunpowder Plot has often been told, with due attention given to the Jesuit element of the story. In *God's Secret Agents*, however, Alice Hogge follows a different path, focusing with great skill on the Jesuits and their mission to England. Genuine aspects of the Jesuits' presence and sensibility, she argues, were expanded by English paranoia to produce the unjust accusation that the Jesuits had been the instigators of the Gunpowder Plot—along with nearly every other thwarted effort to overthrow the government throughout the sixteenth century.

Perhaps Hogge, who is not an academic historian, was drawn to the period by her Recusant ancestry and her background in theater. The characters who people her narrative are participants in a high drama. Hogge tells the story thoroughly and with just the right amount of detail: enough to draw us into the landscape, but not so much that we are overwhelmed with complexities. The narrative reads as smoothly as a novel—but this is not fiction. The individuals were real, their struggles and anguished, and their blood really did spill on English soil.

Hogge's tale begins toward the end of the sixteenth century, when English Catholics suffered under the "Penal Laws," the government measures, enacted and expanded over the course of the century, that were designed to make the practice of Catholicism difficult. The laws banned Catholics from certain professions, prohibited the celebration of the Mass, mandated attendance at local Anglican parishes, and banned priests from the country. Increasingly burdensome fines were levied on those who refused to attend the local government-sanctioned church, to the point at which Lord Grey, no

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Catholic, remarked in 1593, "I was under the impression that our purpose hitherto was merely to keep the Papists humbled and in subjection so that they should cause no trouble. We have sucked them dry and reduced them to extreme poverty. Now we strive to harass them yet further. It is plain to me we are persecuting religion."

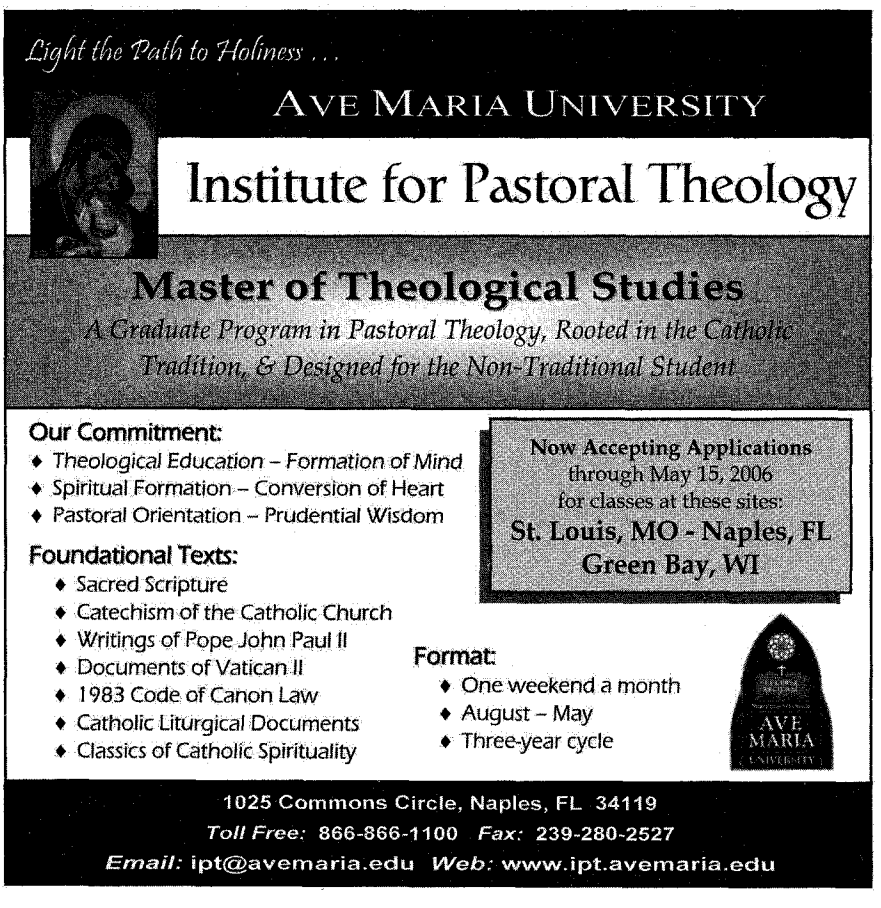
And why did the Papists need to be humbled? Because they were, it was believed, inherently treasonous. In 1570, Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth and declared her a heretic and a pretender to the throne—thereby, on paper, releasing English Catholics from loyalty to her. Together with ongoing tensions with Spain, as well as Catholic persecution past (under Queen Mary) and present (the St. Bartholomew's Massacre of French Huguenots), this rendered Catholics, with their divided allegiances, suspect and worse.

The atmosphere of repression and fear took its toll. William Allen—the priest who founded, among other things, the English College in Douai—toured England for two years in the mid-1560s and found the Catholic population dispirited and drained, headed for "the miserable abyss of destruction." Some of Allen's students at Douai and the English College in Rome crossed back over to minister to English Catholics in the late 1570s. It was not until 1580 that the Jesuits got involved, approved with some reluctance by their superior general. Their orders were strict and clear: They were to minister to the spiritual needs of those who were already Catholic, to encourage reversion, not necessarily conversion, and above all, never to involve themselves in political matters.

The mission was, of course, extremely dangerous, since being a Catholic priest was illegal in England, and those caught normally met a fate similar to Father Garnet's. The figures involved in this mission were characters indeed, and Hogge paints their portraits vividly. Some names are familiar. Robert Southwell, the poet and mystic, was tortured thirteen times before he was finally executed. The brilliant Edmund Campion, who had bested his opponents in an Oxford debate right in front of the queen, was savagely executed while he reminded witnesses to pray for that same queen.

Riding alongside are lesser-known figures: John Gerard, for instance, who disguised himself quite ably as a card-playing, hunting gentleman, sojourning in various great houses, gaming in the light and celebrating the sacraments in the darkness. Gerard was arrested and tortured, but (thanks to notes written in orange juice and sympathizers on the outside) escaped by jumping from the prison into a boat on the Thames. Meanwhile, Catholic women protected the faith, taught their children, and hid priests: Margaret Clitherow, for example, who was martyred for her efforts, and Anne Vaux, who assisted Garnet despite persistent rumors about their relationship. Laymen of every strata of society did their best to keep the faith but at the same time maintain in some form their loyalty to their country.

Perhaps the figure who evokes the strongest sympathy and admiration is Nicholas Owen, lay brother and master constructor of priest-hides. Dedicated to the cause, Owen traveled about the country, fabricating the ingenious holes and cubbies that searchers could miss though they spent days tearing apart a suspected safety house. Owen was arrested more than once, and during his final imprisonment, he held fast to his silence about the priests' identities and died while being tortured. Owen's enemies declared that he had committed suicide, but others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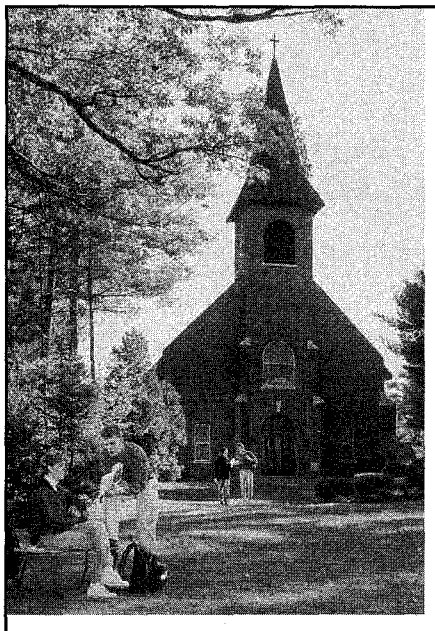
roundly disputed those rumors. Owen was canonized in 1970.

The Jesuits' mission was fraught with complexities, as they worked to maintain the faith while also keeping Catholics safe, sometimes even in conflict with other Catholic priests—the appellants, or English secular clergy, who distrusted the Jesuits. The pope did not always help, as he failed to understand the changing role of religion in societies, since even the Spanish ultimately set toleration of Catholics aside as a condition of peace with England. Nor did he help when Garnet, sensing that something was afoot with a group of Catholics—including one named Guy Fawkes—frantically asked Rome to make a clear and firm statement against Catholics using violence to achieve their ends.

As Hogge traces the slow, agonizing path by which the Jesuits were unjustly implicated in the Gunpowder Plot—a path strewn with seemingly minor decisions like hearing a confession, writing a letter, or delaying a journey—the question of equivocation came to the fore. This was the point at which the government's case against the Jesuits gained its popular force: the accusation that the Jesuits advised and approved the art of "equivocation," answering questions in a way that would satisfy interrogators but at the same time preserve interior honesty. Being asked, "Are you a priest?" one could answer "No," meaning, in one's own mind, "No, I am not a priest of Zeus." Equivocation was debated among moral theologians, and Garnet himself wrote a treatise in cautious support of it.

The question, answered equivocally or not, that caused the most problems was one that came to be known as the "Bloody Question": If the pope were to invade England, whom would you support, the pope or the queen? Over time, the Bloody Question took slightly different forms, but the essence remained the same: Whose side are you on?

The truth was that most English Catholics wanted to be on *both* sides. They were loyal to their country and their monarch, and they also wanted to practice their religion in peace. In the sixteenth century, this was not thought to be possible, of course, as religious toleration was the ideal of neither Church nor state. But as the decades progressed, it became the last best hope of English Catholics. James I manipulated this hope in his effort to cement his succession—and then dashed it with even fiercer enforcement of the Penal Laws, a



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frustration and turnabout which ultimately inspired the Gunpowder Plot.

With her account of courage and divided loyalties, Hogge is moved to reflect on the situation of Muslims in England today. But readers of *God's Secret Agents* will be reminded just as strongly of the difficult choices that Catholics in nations like China still face as they try to practice their religion and please the government, all while being buffeted by the changes in their country's international relations and differing perceptions of the Vatican's intentions.

The four-hundredth anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot was commemorated quietly in England last November. And this year, another anniversary will be marked, as the English Jesuits hold lectures and services to remember their martyrs. One of the events will be a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Winifrid, site of a pilgrimage made in the summer of 1605 by Henry Garnet, Anne Vaux, Nicholas Owen, and thirty other English Catholics. Garnet might have prayed there that the pope would respond to his letters, written amid rumors of violence. Certainly they all prayed for healing, and, we might guess, for strengthening of their faith in the face of deep hostility.

And now, four hundred years later, new pilgrims will pray—but still for healing and strengthening of their faith.

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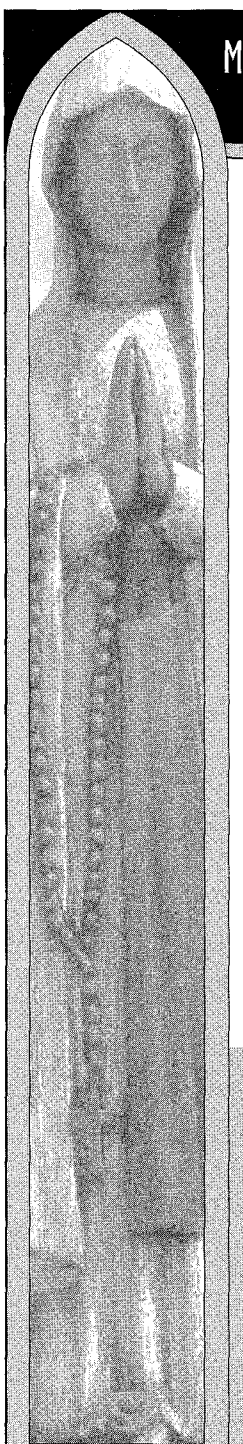

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Philosophers and the Old Adam

PHILOSOPHICAL MYTHS OF THE FALL
by STEPHEN MULHALL
Princeton University Press, 160 pages, $29.95

Reviewed by Thomas Hibbs

STANLEY CAVELL CRAFTED the phrase "truth in foul disguise" to describe Nietzsche's analysis of Christianity. Stephen Mulhall's new book, *Philosophical Myths of the Fall*, takes Cavell's phrase as a clue to the interpretation of the supple dialectical stance toward Christianity adopted not just by Nietzsche but also by two other German philosophers, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, who together constitute the three most influential philosophers in the second half of the twentieth century.

Mulhall's rich and generally compelling argument could, I suppose, be classified as a version of the secularization thesis concerning modern philosophy. In his famous *Heavenly City of the 18th-Century Philosophers*, Carl Becker argued that Enlightenment philosophers were not nearly as independent of Christianity as they claimed. They replaced an other-worldly paradise with a socially constructed heaven in this life. For Mulhall, anti-Enlightenment German philosophers are suspicious of any final transformation, offered by either infused faith or rational engineering. Although they suggest remedial strategies, they focus less on redemption than on the fall and less on philosophical reason than on myth.

To put it more precisely, Mulhall's view is that these philosophers "preserve a version of human nature . . . as structurally perverse or errant and yet redeemable from that fallen state," but they also "refuse to accept that such redemption is attainable only from a transcendental or divine source." Indeed, the entire notion of redemption is a problem for these thinkers, especially Nietzsche and Heidegger, for whom Christian redemption is at best a diversion from knowledge of our true condition and at worst a fundamental cause of our alienation. Still, Mulhall sees all three thinkers as coming round to some version of human restoration, of at least a partial overcoming of our structural perversion.

Mulhall raises two sorts of questions about these philosophical myths. The first concerns the extent to which the accounts of human descent are parasitic upon purportedly repudiated Christian ways of understanding the human condition. The second has to do with the dubious efficacy of any remedies that, refusing a transcendent response, appeal to the same human condition that they describe as inherently fallen and turned against itself.

BY FAR THE MOST interesting chapter in the book is the one on Nietzsche, who famously argued that the road to modern nihilism is paved by Christian theology as it insists on seeing this life as void of significance except as a means to another world, transcending this one. But Nietzsche, who at one point describes his task as translating man back into nature, offers his own myth of the fall. It has its roots in the Jewish and Christian slave rebellion in morals, a rebellion that—in its celebration of meekness, chastity, and humility—inverts the noble values of antiquity. In contrast to the pagan attitude of generous gratitude in the face of nature, Christians are suspicious of nature, seeing it as deceptive, tempting, and infected with sin. For Nietzsche, humanity's fall consists precisely in its acceptance of the Christian myth of the Fall. Nietzsche's account of our need to be rescued from the Christian account of sin and redemption "turns out to reproduce rather than transcend a paradoxical structure of Christian thought."

While some contemporary interpreters of Nietzsche might find this surprising, it is doubtful that Nietzsche would. In its revaluation of the values of antiquity and its accentuation of ascetic self-overcoming, Christianity anticipates the value-creating artistry Nietzsche prizes. A wonderful passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* captures the seriousness with which Nietzsche takes Christianity: "So far the most powerful human beings have still bowed worshipfully before the saint as the riddle of self-conquest. . . . The powerful of the world learned a new fear before him; they sensed a new power, a strange, as yet unconquered enemy—it was the will to power that made them stop before the saint. They had to ask him—"

LIKE NIETZSCHE, Heidegger's major works involve sustained interrogation of Christian doctrines. Indeed, Heidegger's own teachings on ecstatic temporality and dread owe much to such Christian thinkers as Augustine and Kierkegaard. Mulhall offers an illuminating comparison with Kierkegaard, for whom no single choice or series of choices, much less the capacity itself of choosing, can confer meaning on human life; instead, a sense of purpose can be provided only by something outside my life that can be related to it as a whole. Kierkegaard calls this the Absolute, or God. To relate absolutely to the Absolute is not to treat God as a thing or a substance, as one more, albeit the highest and best, item on a list of goods or values. Our relation to God reveals at every moment our own incompleteness, the way in which we are inherently enigmatic to ourselves, since we are

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maintained in existence by an intimate relation to what is Wholly Other. The danger with equating God with the wholly other is that God becomes no thing or nothing. And this provides a nice transition to Heidegger. Not God but death is, for Heidegger, that in relation to which we can grasp our existence as a finite whole. In our being toward death, authenticity is established as relatedness to our own nullity. In his descriptions of alienation, diversion, boredom, and dread as well as in his insistence that mortality is the key to authentic self-knowledge, Heidegger recasts Christian themes of our fallenness.

In a study of philosophical myths of the fall, the inclusion of Nietzsche and Heidegger, whose writings constitute a sustained and passionate confrontation with Christianity, is not surprising. Wittgenstein's inclusion is, however. The section on Wittgenstein begins with the opening reflections from the *Philosophical Investigations*, in which Wittgenstein comments on Augustine's account from early in the *Confessions* of the way we learn a language. All words are names that refer in non-controversial and reasonably direct ways to objects and activities in the world. For Wittgenstein, by contrast, learning to use words is not a matter of linking up isolated terms with discrete objects but of participating in what he calls language games, the practice of learning how go about living and acting in certain contexts.

AT LEAST IN HIS MAJOR works, Wittgenstein never speaks of a cosmic fall, but he does describe in much less dramatic terms a systematic and mysterious dislocation of human language, thought, and action from the framework or language games in which they are embedded. Here the fall involves a sort of cognitive dislocation, the illusion that we can think and live "beyond or outside language games." Modern skepticism and the philosophical project of justifying knowledge arise equally from this illusion. Mulhall wonders, how did we fall into "such confusion to begin with"? How to explain or even describe this inexplicable lapse? In Wittgenstein's therapeutic remedy, by which we are liberated from the illusion that human knowledge can achieve an unconditioned foundation, Mulhall detects a similarity to Augustine for whom we are able to attain our true nature by relation with a particular person whose

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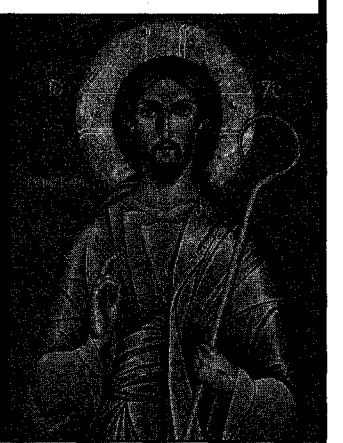

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words make our re-orientation possible. The moment of grace occurs not with the philosophical solution to intricate epistemological problems but with the "vanishing of the problem." This involves a "spiritual idea of accepting the world's independence of our will, of accepting our own finitude."

One of the problems with Mulhall's account is that, of the three philosophers studied in the book, only Nietzsche, in his account of the transition from noble to slave morality, offers an explicit narrative of what we might term the transition from a pre-lapsarian state to a post-lapsarian one. Indeed, Mulhall himself seems given to a sort of Heideggerian reading of the fall as woven into the very fabric of human finitude. Human beings are, on his reading of Christianity, "necessarily, essentially sinful before God." He adds, "In apparently conceiving of the familiar facets of embodiment . . . as manifestations of the Fall, of our falling away from our paradisal selves, it constitutes a libel against the body."

This makes Mulhall's Christianity look gnostic or neoplatonic, according to which embodiment itself constitutes a lapse, an imprisonment within the physical realm. In terms that he associates with Kierkegaard, Mulhall depicts the mystery of sin: A sinful act cannot be explained, for sinful acts presuppose sinfulness and sinfulness presupposes sinful acts. However difficult it may be to conceive of an original sinful act performed by an innocent human being, that teaching is central to Christian orthodoxy. As Paul Ricoeur stressed some years ago in his magisterial book, *The Symbolism of Evil*, the "Adamic myth" distinguishes guilt from finitude and "sets up a radical origin of evil distinct from the more primordial origin of the goodness of things."

Apart from the discussion of Wittgenstein, many readers will not find much novelty in Mulhall's insistence upon the dialectical indebtedness of Nietzsche or Heidegger to Christianity. The dependence has most often been acknowledged in the form of a complaint that, despite their own stated goals, both Nietzsche and Heidegger remain too tied to western metaphysics or to grand narratives of the sort boldly proclaimed in Christianity. Nietzsche detected in Enlightenment secularists the residues of Christian morality, the extirpation of which would require a direct confrontation with nihilism. Then, in Nietzsche's eschewal of metaphysics, Heidegger detected a metaphysics. Returning the favor, French commentators discovered in Heidegger's overcoming of metaphysics—what else?—a lingering metaphysics. Endless deconstruction ensues.

Mulhall's re-opening of issues of fall and redemption is not so much a re-construction of a specific answer as it is a re-articulation of the germane questions and a re-thinking of possible responses. Mulhall simultaneously puts into question the adequacy of the philosophical myths and raises the prospect of re-considering the Christian account. The chief deficiency in the philosophical myths is that their suggested remedies appeal to "merely human sources of therapy or emancipatory help"—and thus they offer no real hope for the overcoming of our condition. They deprive us of the "joy of being wrong." For Mulhall, their very mimicking of decidedly religious ways of thinking about the human condition re-opens the question of religious truth. Mulhall rightly concludes that "such a reorientation of our contemporary sense of cultural possibilities" would be "no small thing."

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Portrait of the Philosopher as a Young Man

AN INFAMOUS PAST: E.M. CIORAN AND THE RISE OF FASCISM IN ROMANIA
by MARTA PETREU
Ivan R. Dee, 332 pages, $30

Reviewed by Zbigniew Janowski

IT IS AN UNENVIABLE task for a biographer to dig up the dirt in someone's life, and it is worth the effort only if the achievements of the person whose biography he has embarked on writing at least equals the disgrace. Fortunately, writing a biography of the brilliant writer and thinker Emil Cioran *was* worth the effort. Born in Romania in 1911, Cioran spent most of his life in France, where he gained the reputation of a great French stylist. Recognition of his literary achievements came with the Paul Morand prize for literature accorded by the French Academy, the highest intellectual institution in France. (Cioran declined this award, as he declined other awards).

But in distinction to the French period of the philosopher's literary glory, the Romanian period is rather shameful. As Marta Petreu documents in her excellent *An Infamous Past: E.M. Cioran and the Rise of Fascism in Romania*, the young Cioran was involved in promoting Fascism. Of course, the twentieth century abounds in intellectuals who actively supported ideological movements. The list of those who have succumbed to the charms of communism, for instance, is endless.

Fascism, on the other hand, was from the beginning culturally destructive and sterile, and attracted relatively few intellectuals beyond Heidegger, Céline, and Pound. It is particularly shocking to read about Cioran's enthusiasm for Hitler. At the age of twenty-three, as a holder of a doctoral stipend in Berlin, he wrote: "When I see the Hitler Youth marching on the streets of Berlin, all dressed in uniform, . . . I cannot help being outraged and disgusted by the gap that separates the German youth from the Romanian." Statements like this are not uncommon in his writings from that period. But, as Marta Petreu points out, Cioran's attraction to Hitlerism was never the mindless submission of his intellect to the state ideology; it was always mitigated by his own consideration. Cioran saw Hitlerism as a "narrow" ideology, based on an "unreadable . . . literature." In contradistinction to communism—and here lies the crux of his commitment—it had the power to galvanize a nation: "If I were to see a Communist youth as dynamic as the German one, I would be just as thrilled."

Romania in Cioran's youth was an underdeveloped country, consisting mainly of a peasant population. As part of the Ottoman Empire, Romania did not go through the Enlightenment, industrialization, and nation building that formed the development of Western European countries. As a young man, Cioran fell under Spengler's spell. His constant comparisons of Romania to Germany and France became his youthful obsession. The other nations' cultural achievements created in him a feeling of personal humiliation. Spengler's classification of cultures as major and peripheral made Cioran believe that only the mobilization of the national spirit

ZBIGNIEW JANOWSKI *is the author of* Cartesian Theodicy, Augustinian-Cartesian Index, *and the forthcoming* How to Read Descartes' Meditations.

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was capable of raising Romania from the midst of a cultural abyss.

After declaring its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1871, and the events of World War I (which gained her the territory of Transylvania), Romania was transformed from an essentially ethnically unified nation into a melting pot of several nations, where minorities constituted 29 percent of the population. Fascism appeared to offer—particularly when seen through the prism of the "revitalized" Germany of Hitler—a vision of a nation with a historical *destiny*. Democracy, the internationalism of capitalism, and communism, on the other hand, were perceived as hindrance to the development of a nation—a nation that one could feel proud of belonging to.

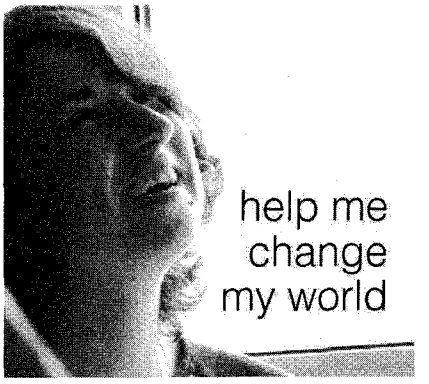
IN ADDITION TO articles written during the 1930s, Petreu's main source for reconstructing Cioran's Romanian philosophy, is his *Transfiguration*, published in 1936. The book contains an elaborate treatment of the dictatorial way in which the transfiguration of Romania—from a peasant country to an industrialized and modern one, an international player—could supposedly be accomplished. It also contains a catalogue of insults about his countrymen ("hideous, starving peasants"). These vices, Cioran believed, could be turned into virtues only through the "acceleration" of national development by means of dictatorship. Paradoxically, Cioran's ardent desire to put Romania on the map of Europe made him commit himself to promote Fascist dictatorship. Cioran's hatred for everything that hampered the development of the national idea led to a hatred for everything foreign—and a belief in a foreign ideology to accomplish his goal of "Romanism."

Particularly interesting in Cioran's biography is the chapter devoted to anti-Semitism. As Petreu points out, anti-Semitism hardly existed historically among Romanians. During the interwar period, however, anti-Jewish feelings began to find a peculiar twist. The Jews were perceived as those who promoted democracy and capitalism—paradoxically, again, everything that could help Romania to drag herself from her cultural slumber—but reserved the right to practice their own nationalism without wanting others to do it. In intellectual terms, this perception of Jews could be translated into an acknowledgment of a Jewish right to strong identity—the identity that Cioran admired for its cultural vibrancy and took as his model—and an awareness of the lack of a parallel mechanism that would give Romanians a sense of national identity to redeem their past.

From 1927 to 1939, democracy and capitalism on the one side and the national idea on the other clashed, leading to the rise of Romanian Fascism. Cioran's *Transfiguration* did not receive particularly warm praise on the right, but it was well-known. As Petreu says, there is no evidence that Nicolai Ceausescu, Romania's later Communist dictator, read the book, but his megalomaniac vision of "Great Romania" bears resemblance to Cioran's general thought from the 1930s. Although Cioran would later despise Ceausescu for his mental primitivism, his 1930s praise of dictatorship, which, he believed, could transform Romania, can be recognized in Ceausescu's economic, social, and cultural policies.

The French Cioran—Cioran without his national preoccupations—is an entirely different person. His French voice is gentle and lacks the militant spirit. Sometimes it tacitly points out the hidden danger in the German spirit. In *All Gall Is Divided* (1951), Cioran writes: "Had Napoleon occupied Germany with the citizens of Marseilles, the face of the world would be altogether different." And "Might the solemn nations be meridionalized? The future of Europe hangs on this question. If the Germans return to their labors as before, the West is doomed." In another aphorism, we read, "Luther, that prefiguration of modern man, assumed every kind of disequilibrium: both a Pascal and a Hitler cohabited within him."

So what prompted the young Cioran to fall into this trap of thinking that a German form of dictatorship could "accelerate" Romania's development in the realm of ideas? Simplistic as it may sound, the answer may be his youthful impatience. In 1968, when he saw the youth rebelling on the streets of Paris—also in the name of a "transfiguration" of French society—Cioran wrote to his friend: "The only



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thing I can tell you about the recent events in my neighborhood is that they reminded me of the 'heroic' age of the Iron Guard.... Nothing will come of it.... Quite decidedly, I am getting older."

And yet, it would be too easy to absolve someone—particularly a man who, at the age of twenty-six, was the author of three books and the manuscript of a beautiful book of aphorisms about mystics, *Tears and Saints*—by devolving his moral responsibility on the silliness characteristic of a young age. *Tears and Saints*, completed before his departure for Paris, reveals exceptional maturity of intellect and religious sensitivity. Reading it, we find it all the more difficult to understand Cioran's admiration for the Hitler Youth movement harnessed in the service of evil.

His "Learning from the Tyrants," in *History and Utopia* (1954), corroborates his youthful choice: "Tragic paradox of freedom: The mediocre men who alone make its [the republic's] exercise possible cannot guarantee its duration. We owe everything to their insignificance, and we lose everything by it.... It is this mediocrity that I hated in the days when I unreservedly loved tyrants.... In order not to yield to political temptation, we must keep a close watch over ourselves at every moment. How to manage this, especially in a democratic regime, whose essential vice is to permit anyone at all to seek power."

Cioran, of course, is not the first one to reveal the traditional contempt for democratic mediocrity, which was shared by democratic theoreticians themselves (including Benjamin Franklin). But the contempt Cioran had for his own people was probably helpful in fostering his early anti-democratic prejudice and made it easier for him to accept this premise in the 1930s as the only valid political constant. By 1954, he could add, "Yet it is their very nullity that permits and secures our liberties."

Marta Petreu tries to locate the source of Cioran's youthful engagement by pointing to his stylistic ingenuity. According to her, there is a link between Cioran and the Greek Sophists, for whom truth and falsehood, due to verbal manipulation, could be true and false at the same time. For Cioran, she writes, "the only reality was that of the verbal universe."

One should note, however, that Cioran belongs first and foremost to the tradition of Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, Pascal, the seventeenth-century Libertines, and the later existentialist tradition, with which he shared his preoccupation with death, the paradoxes of human existence, morality, religion, God. However lightly the Libertines approached the question of moral absolutes, they did not abrogate the traditional moral distinctions. A typical Cioranian aphorism runs: "Some people still wonder if life has meaning. In fact, it all comes down to knowing whether it is *bearable*.

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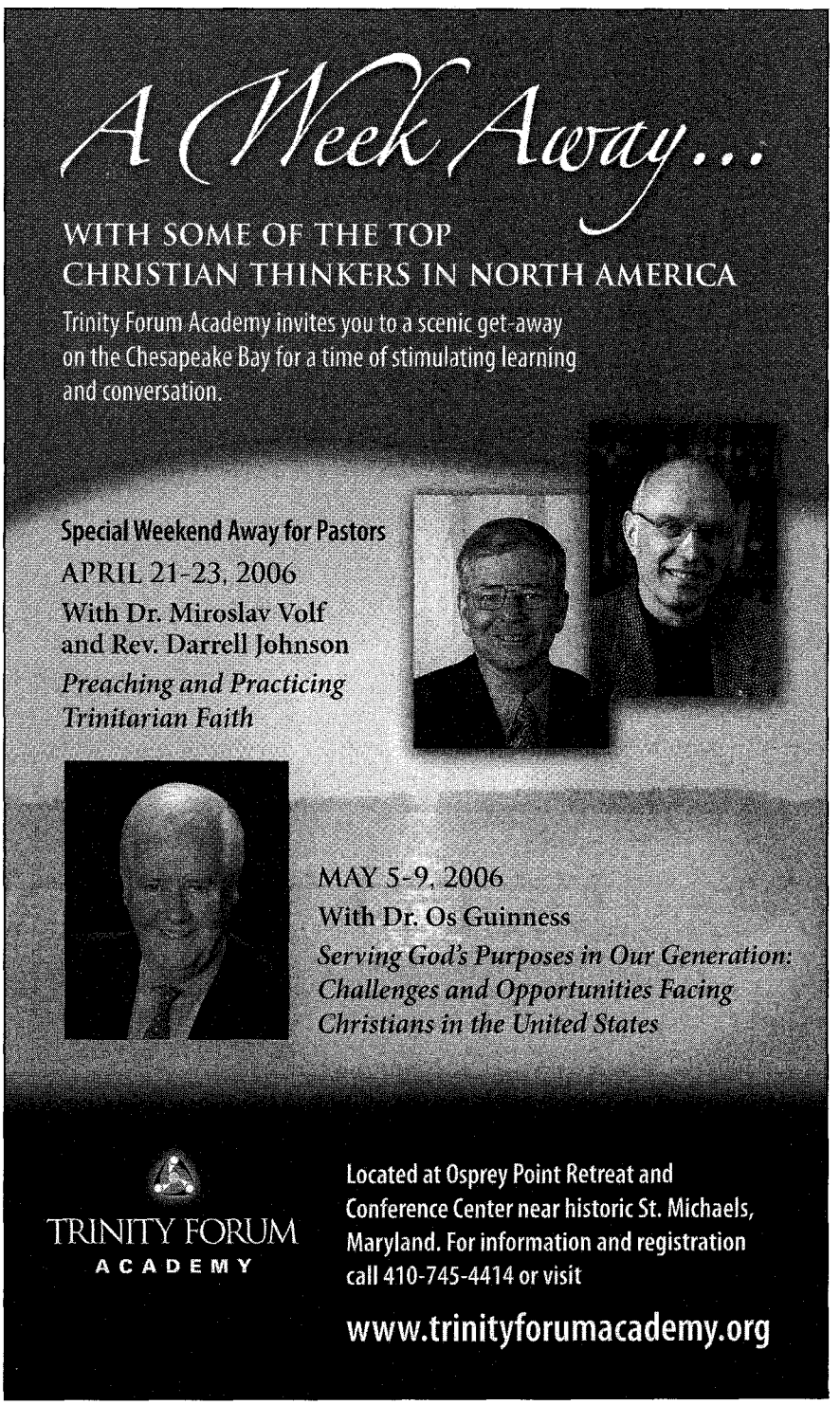
Then 'problems' cease and decisions begin." Or: "We are all humbugs: We *survive* our problems." These aphorisms sound much more like La Rochefoucauld's maxims or statements of existentialist philosophers.

In 1991, stricken by the Alzheimer's disease that impaired his speech, he whispered: "I . . . am . . . not . . . an . . . anti- . . . Semite." This sentence is worth quoting not merely because it suggests that Cioran recognized the wrongness of the deeds which sullied his past and cost others their lives. It is also a dying stylist's recognition of moral absolutes that neither the "historical acceleration" nor the "libertinism" of his style abrogated.

Cioran was haunted by his past throughout his French period. "The writer who has done some stupid things in his youth, upon his debut, is like a woman with a shameful past. Never forgiven, never forgotten," he wrote his brother in 1979. Marta Petreu's biography is a well-documented account of everything shameful that Cioran ever wrote. The true virtue of her account, however, lies in the fact that it is not limited to merely exposing one person's shameful past. Petreu's biography covers much of European history of that period, the social conditions of the post-Versailles Treaty Europe that help to understand how a thinker of Cioran's caliber could commit himself to promoting one of the most wretched ideologies.

Cioran's life in France was politically and socially uneventful. Consistent with his own maxim—"To want fame is to prefer dying scorned than forgotten"—Cioran shunned the world. During the last decade of his life, he even stopped frequenting cafes and attending social events, limiting his pleasures to strolling in Jardin du Luxembourg. With the exception of Rivarol prize, which he was awarded for his *A Short History of Decay*, his first book published in France, he never accepted any literary prize. Nor did he ever hold an official professional position. During his early Parisian period he was helped financially by his close friend Samuel Beckett. (Beckett was also the first one to introduce Cioran to an English-speaking audience in a 1961 issue of *Evergreen Review*.) He made his very modest living as a free-lance reviewer and translator for different publishing houses.

Despite the fact that all of his works have been translated into English, Cioran is known in the United States almost exclusively to a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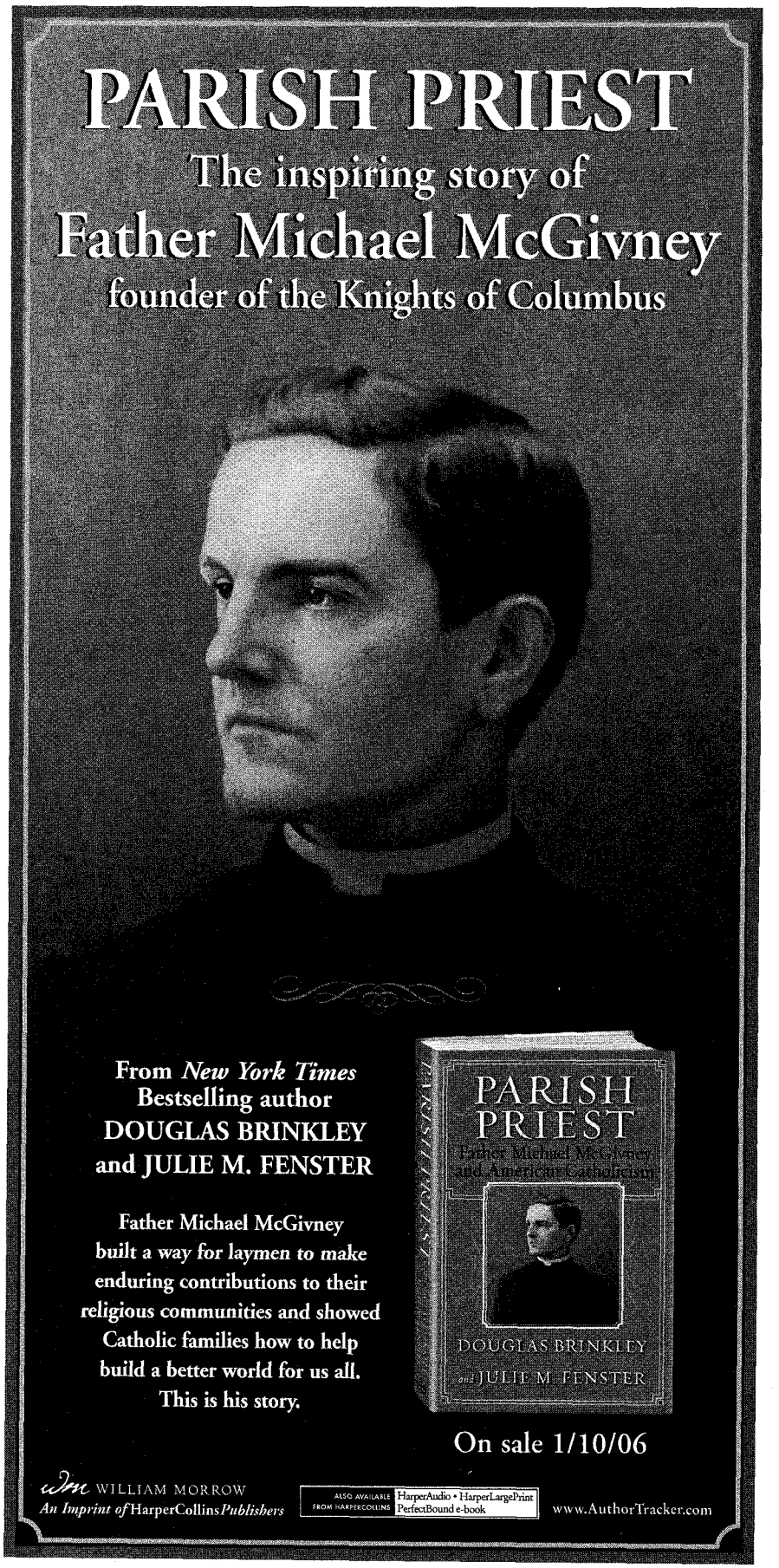
small group of American intelligentsia. In part the reason for this lies in his aphoristic style, which does not lend itself to presentation as a system or a clear idea of which department of thought—theology, philosophy or political theory—they belong to, even though, like Pascal's "pensées," they belong to each of them. Cioran was always aware of the "cracks" in reality that cannot be presented as a philosophical *system*. If "all are lunatics, but he who can analyze his delusions is called a philosopher," philosophy must assume an "existential" character, rather than a system.

In many ways, Cioran is a much more interesting thinker than his fellow philosophical aphorizer Nietzsche—and, in my opinion, much more relevant today than the nineteenth-century slayer of God. Cioran does not rejoice in heralding the death of God as the beginning of a "better" era. On the contrary, he seems to be very pessimistic when he writes that "a civilization is destroyed only when its gods are destroyed." Still, his insights into philosophy and religion are far from consoling: "Apart from matter, everything is music: God himself is but a resonant hallucination." For a theologian this is blasphemy; for a "systematic" philosopher it is a literary play on words. Be that as it may, as Richard Howard aptly put it in the introduction to his translation of Cioran's *All Gall is Divided*: "Not since Nietzsche has any thinker revealed himself so drastically."

Cioran once remarked: "Paris is the place to waste one's life." He was born Romanian but for all intents and purposes he was a French writer, and he is considered as such by the French. Still, even as a Frenchman, Cioran did more for Romania's reputation than the dictatorial "acceleration" of the Iron Guard to which he sold his soul as a young man.



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What Good Are Promises?

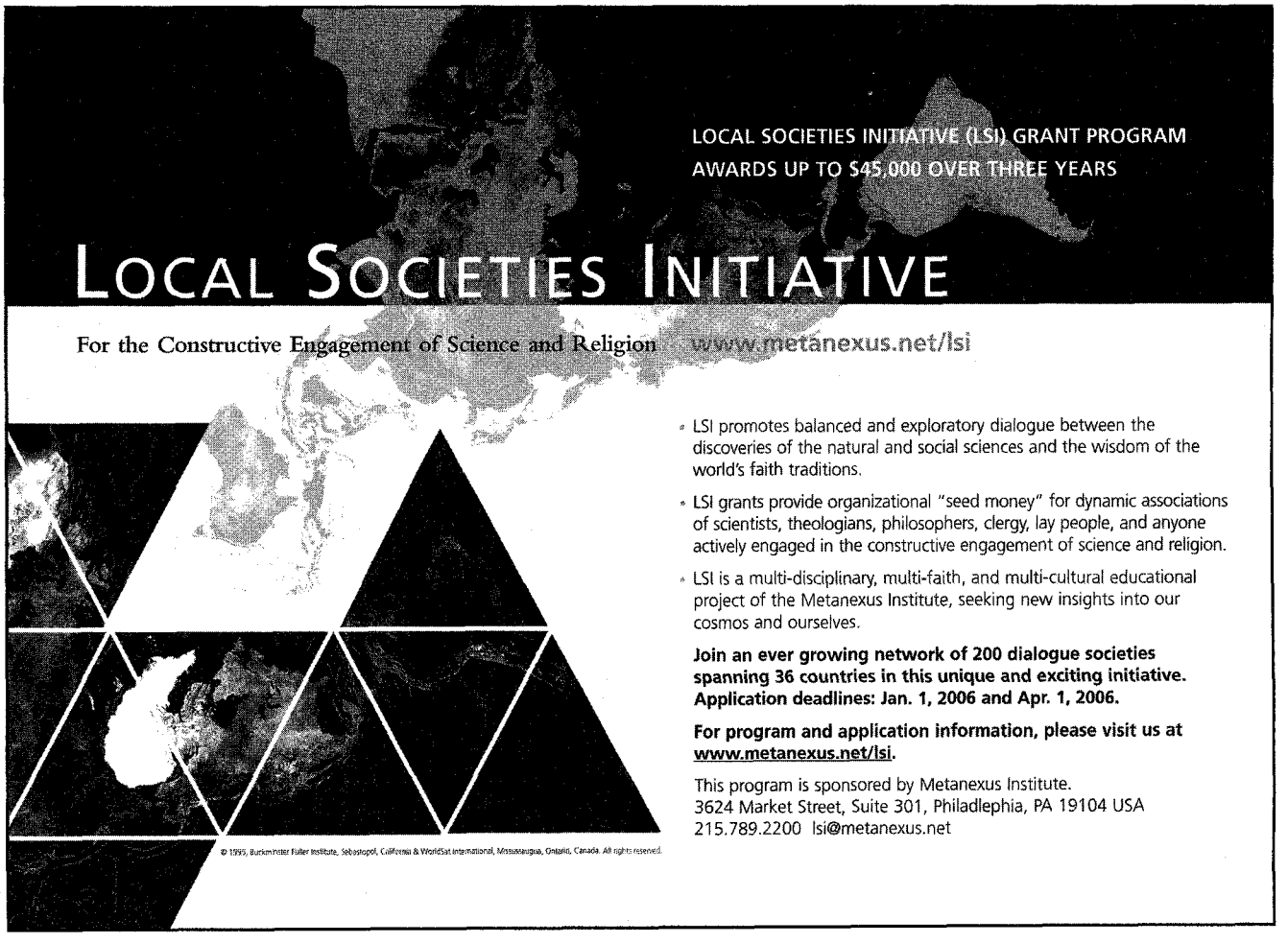
PROMISING AND THE GOOD
by GUY MANSINI, O.S.B.
Sapientia, 173 pages, $21.95

Reviewed by Joseph W. Koterski, S.J.

WHY DO PEOPLE TODAY seem to have so much trouble making and keeping lifelong promises? Ever more couples live together without benefit of marriage, and ever larger numbers of those who do marry later divorce. Few make religious vows today and yet an astonishing number of those who do later depart, with or without the benefit of a dispensation.

No doubt, the reasons for the problem are complex, and often so personal as to elude generalization. But Guy Mansini's analysis in *Promising and the Good* sheds important light on the larger cultural problem, first by treating the general nature of promising, and then by turning to the specific question of religious promises. Arguing historically, he identifies certain societal trends that have transformed what people think they are doing when they make promises. Working philosophically, he distinguishes between views that ground obligation entirely in the free choice by which someone makes a promise, and views that root our obligations in the nature of what is promised. The final portion of his book offers a theological vision: We could truly never imagine ourselves making the kinds of promises that we do in Christian marriage or religious life without the surety of the promise that God has given us in Christ.

The most significant piece in the historical puzzle is the process by which a faulty view of human freedom has come to infect modernity—and thereby to affect whatever progress had been made over the centuries of Christian culture about the role of lifelong commitments in human maturation. It is not, of course, as if there were no promise-breakers in premodern Christianity; history has always been marred by opportunists and traitors. But premodern culture understood the matter differently. Modern readers of Dante, for instance, are often perplexed by the medieval poet's decision to regard betrayal and treachery as lower among the circles of Hell than crimes of violence. The difference, for Mansini, resides in the degree to which voluntarism—not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just theoretically but practically—has penetrated our modern self-understanding and thereby affected the entire understanding of the moral life.

Considered philosophically, the question is how to understand the fact that promising anything creates an obligation. Clearly, the will has to be involved, for we can hardly be obligated by a promise if we have not made a free and deliberate choice. But there must be more to it than just the will. If the obligation of a promise depended only on the will, why couldn't a subsequent act of willing simply dissolve an earlier promise and leave one free to move on? The frequency with which people today often do precisely that indicates how different a philosophical justification they need to invoke as a warrant for their conduct.

Mansini's study interweaves the historical and the philosophical in order to make the case for saying that the source of the obligation of fidelity is not just the freedom with which a given promise was chosen but the nature of the good that is promised. His review of the figures most responsible for undermining the sacred character of promise-making traces the influence of voluntarism through the likes of Nietzsche and Hume and Hobbes back to Ockham, and the resulting survey has a quality that reminds one of Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences.*

Of special interest is chapter eleven, where Mansini links the secularization of culture and the corresponding privatization of religion to the diminution of the role that religion has traditionally played in the processes of character formation and personal maturation. In, say, a Hobbesian world of brute nature, most people would live in a kind of practical atheism, with only the Leviathan State to ensure that promises are binding. By contrast, the Christian vision takes God to be the ultimate authority—One who would remind us with the hope of heaven that He wants us to be as faithful to our promises as He Himself is to His, and that He will help us by His grace.

Interspersed with this deftly handled analysis of the abstract reasoning of philosophers like John Searle and Immanuel Kant, one also finds superb psychological insight into the typical excuses that are offered by way of rationalization for the breaking of promises. Invariably these excuses turn on a faulty anthropology. A failed marriage is labeled "a

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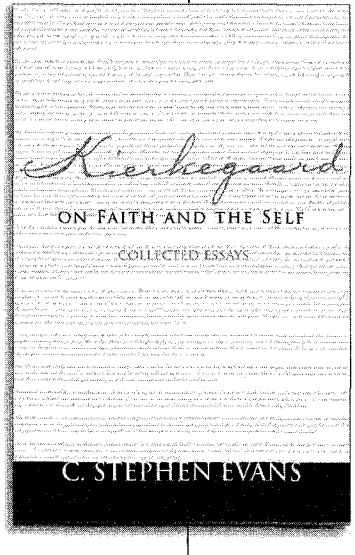

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mistake," as if the promise were really a miscalculation or a failed prediction and not a covenant with another person. Or, in justification for abandoning their ordination, men have been heard to explain, "I'm a different person now. I'm not the same man I used to be"—as if it had been someone else who made the promise. These excuses trade upon a view of the self as entirely self-defining—as if there were no goods antecedent to our choices and as if there were complete liberty to create one's own values as often as needed—and thus to be forgetful that at some point even plastic snaps.

Holding that the promised good is what really generates the obligation, Mansini presents a comprehensive account of the views of St. Thomas Aquinas on intellect and will, with special attention to the interplay of knowing and loving. The will could not be reasonably thought to bind its own future choices unless there were a good to be bound to, a good that needs to be first grasped by the mind and loved as greater than oneself. What thus binds the will is love—love for a good that we do not make good by our act of choice but that we recognize to be good already, independently of our choice, and deserving to be chosen and loved. Unlike Hobbes, who held that the best reason to keep a promise comes from a calculation of comparative utility, Aquinas treats promising as an aspect of friendship and thereby finds that the real reason for keeping promises resides in the duties of benevolence and the intention to look out for the other's good that is at the heart of human friendship. While freedom is clearly a *necessary* condition for making any promise that will oblige us, it cannot be regarded as the *sufficient* condition for the obligation, or else we could throw off a promise to which we no longer felt ourselves attracted.

The act of promising does add something important, of course. It

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Excerpt: Mikhail sat down on a white, wrought-iron bench. While he relaxed there, the sound of children's voices caught his attention. Through a few trees and bushes, he could see several small girls and boys playing with a jump rope. As they jumped, they recited a sing-song chant:

"Kingdoms of darkness, Kingdoms of light,
Guided by angels of power and might;
Once in deep Heaven a great war was fought,
And now to the earth, the battle is brought;
On a holy vessel, you must now sail;
For the sake of the Maiden, you must prevail."

At first Mikhail did not pay much attention to their chant. Then, when they repeated the verses, he took notice.

That is the oddest rhyme for children to be reciting, he thought. He rose from the bench and moved through the light shrubbery toward the children. They were only out of his sight for a matter of seconds, but when he came around a bush, they were gone.

Where could they be? He walked around another row of bushes; no one was there, though. Hearing the telephone ringing in his condo, he trotted back inside, still puzzling over the mystery of the disappearing children.

Maiden of Orleans: A Bayou Thriller is available at **Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com (bn.com), and Booksamillion.com**

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provides security for those who receive our promise that they can now count on our action. But their being able to count on us requires that our obligation to perform a certain action be independent of the mutable state of our preferences, which can surely can change if there is need for sacrifice or even just inconvenience. Likewise, promising adds a public character to whatever good is promised. The advantage here, of course, is a certain force that promotes stability in the will against the possibility of self-interested forgetfulness.

Arrayed against this position is an idea of freedom that has been sapping Western culture for a long time and that has in our era infiltrated even quarters long thought immune to it. Mansini identifies the chief culprit as Ockham's idea of "freedom of indifference"—taken not just as an abstract doctrine of fourteenth-century nominalism, but as an all-too-real element of modern sensibility that makes promise-keeping seem unbearably hard. Every ethical theory, of course, depends upon some vision of human nature. Under this view, binding oneself to a choice for life would seem to mean a diminution of our freedom to define and redefine ourselves—an intolerable burden for those who prize autonomy as the essence of self.

The final portion of *Promising and the Good* is a theological approach to the topic. Making and keeping our promises—even lifelong promises—is an indispensable aspect of our flourishing. On the need for irrevocable promises, Mansini quotes a fascinating line from Hans Urs von Balthasar: "a self-surrender that is temporary is not a genuine self surrender." Yet the strength to be faithful, especially to the special vocations to which God calls us, depends on grace. Our confidence about this divine assistance, not to mention our ultimate model for fidelity to promises, is God Himself, whose gift of Christ and the Holy Spirit to the Church is the fulfillment of promises made long before.

The promises of God, in the series of covenants God made with His people, were not, after all, for God's benefit but entirely for the benefit of humanity. The divine pattern in making promises as well as in keeping them in this way provides a perfect model for our own promises. It pertains not only to the promises that we might make, such as religious life or marriage, where the adventure that begins with the making of the promise is inextricably tied up with

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the incapacity to know before hand exactly what the promise will require. It also pertains to the baptismal promises that most of us never made for ourselves but that others made for us. In Christ God has promised to make available the graces that will be needed.

BRIEFLY NOTED

CHRIST THE LORD: OUT OF EGYPT
by ANNE RICE
Knopf, 321 pages, $25.95

Appalling. That's the word that kept echoing through my mind as I turned the pages of Anne Rice channeling the seven-year-old Jesus Christ in her twenty-seventh novel, the first since her recent return to the Christianity of her childhood. A return to faith should never be belittled. But to celebrate her return by undertaking what is planned as a trilogy from the manger to the Cross as narrated by Him surely bespeaks a certain arrogance. For Rice, Jesus, the seven-year-old narrates in a flat, matter-of-fact way: "In the snap of two fingers everyone drew back. It seemed the whole street went quiet except for the carpenters' hammers. I'd never heard such a quiet." By the third page his brother James is saying, "I saw it. I saw it when he made the sparrows out of clay on the Sabbath. The teacher told him he shouldn't do such things on the Sabbath, Jesus looked at the birds and they turned into real birds. They flew away. You saw it too." By the fourth page Jesus has raised his first person from the dead and by the sixth page Joseph announces he is returning the whole family to Galilee. From there on it's simple, declarative sentences of life in the Holy Land. Rice's prose is neither pseudo-biblical speak nor is it like any language in which a child might express himself: "When I slipped into sleep, a great song opened up, and when I woke, for a moment I didn't know where I was, and the dream was like a veil of gold being pulled away from me. I was all right. It was early morning. The stars were still there." What are we supposed to do with that? *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* is a main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Often novelists find it easier to make evil more appealing than virtue. Will the millions who bought and thrilled to Rice's vampire tales respond in like numbers to her rendering the story of Jesus Christ?

—Cynthia Grenier

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The World and Christian Imagination

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St. Paul exhorts Christians to take every thought captive to Christ. Yet we face significant challenges in doing this in a post-Christian culture marked by atheism, secularism, and the fragmentation of knowledge. How then can we see the shape of the world in the light of Christian imagination at its fullness? Addressing this question, The World and Christian Imagination will not merely explore Christian imagination as such, but will exercise Christian imagination in relation to the breadth of human thought, from atheism to aesthetics, from the Bible to biology, and from cosmology to culture.

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LILLY FELLOWS PROGRAM in HUMANITIES AND THE ARTS

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The Public Square

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

The Truce of 2005?

In his influential book *The Courage to Be Catholic*, George Weigel wrote about the "The Truce of 1968." By that is meant the decision not to discipline the many theologians and priests who, in a public and concerted campaign, rejected the teaching of the 1968 encyclical on human sexuality, *Humanae Vitae* (On Human Life). Now, in view of the widespread rejection—sometimes explicit, sometimes oblique—of the November 4 Vatican instruction on homosexuality and the priesthood, the question is asked whether we should be preparing ourselves for "The Truce of 2005."

An editorial in the liberal magazine *Commonweal*, makes the connections:

> Whether it is birth control, homosexuality, or the range of sexual contact permitted between spouses, church teaching offers little that speaks to the experience of the vast majority of faithful Catholics, who now insist that they know something about sexual morality that the Church's leadership needs to learn.... There is hardly a Catholic alive who doesn't have a colleague, a neighbor, a friend, a relative, or a child who is gay. Like *Humanae Vitae*, barring homosexuals from the priesthood would force many Catholics, both straight and gay, into internal or outright exile from the Church.

It is not surprising when *Commonweal* dissents from magisterial authority. It is also conventional that dissenters assert that a document is not really all that authoritative. And so the editors say that "the document was issued by a Vatican congregation, not by the pope, thus diminishing its authority." In fact, the document bears the notice: "The supreme pontiff Benedict XVI, on August 31, 2005, approved this present instruction and ordered its publication." That, it would seem, is very much like a document issued by the pope. But quibbling over the forms of the document is a distraction from the substantive questions engaged.

It may be thought that the dissent of the editors of *Commonweal* is predictable and not terribly important. There is something to that, and, as we shall see, it is by no means the most important dissent. But the connection with *Humanae Vitae* and 1968 is suggestive. Recall that the Truce of 1968 was put in place when Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle, then archbishop of Washington, D.C., attempted to discipline those who had openly rejected the teaching of the encyclical, only to have the rug pulled out from under him by higher authority in Rome.

Weigel writes that "everyone involved understood that Pope Paul VI wanted the 'Washington Case' settled without a public retraction from the dissidents, because the pope feared that insisting on such a retraction would lead to schism—a formal split in the Church in Washington, and perhaps beyond. The pope, evidently, was willing for a time to tolerate dissent on an issue on which he had made a solemn, authoritative statement, hoping that the day would come when, in a calmer cultural and ecclesiastical

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atmosphere, the truth of that teaching could be appreciated. The mechanism agreed upon to buy time for that to happen was the 'Truce of 1968.'" We are still, according to Weigel, living with the consequences of that decision:

> Whatever the intentions of those who negotiated the Truce of 1968, the net result of this remarkable episode was to promote intellectual, moral, and disciplinary disorder in the Catholic Church in the United States. The lesson learned was that rejecting moral doctrines solemnly proclaimed by the Church's teaching authority was, essentially, penalty-free. Obedience to what the Church taught to be the truth, and obedience to legitimate ecclesiastical superiors, were now, somehow, optional. That disorder and indiscipline followed should not have been surprising.

The recent instruction from the Congregation for Catholic Education is not, strictly speaking, doctrinal. It is a directive *based upon* moral doctrine and might best be described as a prudential judgment made by "legitimate ecclesiastical superiors" and to be followed by all under their authority. Further, while it is issued by the authority of the pope, it does not, unlike *Humanae Vitae*, carry the more solemn weight of an encyclical. That having been said, it requires a measure of exegetical agility to interpret some of the criticisms of the instruction as anything less than a rejection of the Church's constantly held doctrine regarding human sexuality, and homosexuality in particular. The teaching is that homosexual desires are objectively disordered and homosexual acts are intrinsically immoral. This is joined to a call to respect and extend pastoral care to those who are burdened by same-sex desire, helping them to respond, along with sinners of every kind, to the "universal call to holiness."

The Quality of Dissimulation

The instruction says that the Church "cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies, or support the so-called 'gay culture.'" Immediate objections came hard and fast to all three stipulations. What does it mean to "practice homosexuality"? Is support for the civil rights of homosexuals a form of support for "gay culture"? And, most of all, what is meant by "deep-seated homosexual tendencies"? Some of these questions are understandable and no doubt honestly asked. Many of the challenges to the instruction, however, reflect a continuing decline in the quality of dissimulation practiced by those who reject the magisterial teaching of the Church.

There is, for instance, a mix of candor, defiance, and evasion in a December 8 letter sent by the provincial, Father Robert Scullin, S.J., to the members of the Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus. He writes: "The instruction's call to affective maturity as a necessary condition for a healthy celibate priesthood and religious life affirms the long-standing goal of our formation program—both initial and continuing. All of us must continue to work toward an integrated affective sexual maturity if we wish to be of greater service to the Church and civil society. We continue to invite all qualified young men of either orientation who desire to lead a celibate chaste religious life to consider joining us on our mission. We welcome them and are proud to have them among us."

In short, and the instruction notwithstanding, the Society of Jesus will continue to do what it has been doing. (The reference to "either orientation," with its implicit exclusion of the bisexual and transsexual, is somewhat surprising.) The above provincial is very displeased, however, by a member of the province who "outed" himself as gay in the *Detroit Free Press*. Father Thomas J. O'Brien, S.J., criticizes the teaching that homosexuality is objectively disordered. "There is plentiful evidence that this is not true," he writes. "Lesbian sisters and gay brothers and priests have, indeed, been models of relating to people—especially to the disenfranchised and excluded of society." Of the instruction he says, "This document reveals a fundamentally disordered view of gender and sexual orientation." Affirming the invaluable contributions made by homosexual, bisexual, transgendered, and transsexual persons, Fr. O'Brien concludes: "Thankfully, God is greater than any religion or any church."

Referring to Fr. O'Brien's public statement, Fr. Scullin, his provincial, writes: "I can appreciate the distress that led him to speak out. Yet we are first members of an apostolic body, and so personal actions, however compelling we feel them to be, have consequences for all our brothers and all our works." Fr. Scullin therefore asks that "no Jesuit take any controversial public step without prior, direct consultation with the provincial." Fr. Scullin in no way suggests that he disagrees with Fr. O'Brien's rejection of church teaching, only that it should be kept within the family, so to speak. As he puts it, "This is our way of proceeding." It is a way of proceeding that candidly says (at least within the family) that the instruction will be ignored, while asking Jesuits to be publicly discreet about their repudiation of the Church's teaching on sexuality.

While members of other religious orders, some diocesan priests, and even a few bishops who have cultivated a reputation for being "gay-friendly" have

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sharply criticized the November instruction, the Jesuits do seem to be in the vanguard of the attack. Father Thomas Reese, S.J., who recently resigned as editor of *America*, a Jesuit weekly—or was removed, depending on which account one credits (see FIRST THINGS August/September 2005)—complains, "The Vatican is making decisions about the appropriateness of ordaining homosexuals in total ignorance of how many current priests are homosexuals, how well they observe celibacy, and how well they do ministry."

The instruction makes the point that nobody has a right to be ordained to the priesthood and that the final decision rests with the Church which is responsible for her own ministry. To which Fr. Reese responds, "If someone is called to the priesthood by God but denied it by church officials, then it is not a violation of a human right; it is a violation of a divine right—the right of God to call whomever he chooses to the priesthood." Presumably, the individual discerns whether he—or, for that matter, she—is called to the priesthood, and the role of the Church is limited to ratifying that discernment. Needless to say, this is not the way the Catholic Church understands the vocation to priesthood.

Cognitive Dissonance

Father John Coleman, S.J., is acclaimed by some as one of the leading intellectual lights among contemporary Jesuits. He teaches at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and is a frequent contributor to *America* and *Theological Studies*, a Jesuit quarterly. He recently addressed the annual meeting of the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries. "I am, simultaneously, a gay man, a professional sociologist, and an ordained priest of the Roman Catholic Church," he said. "Not surprisingly, these different, even conflicting, roles and their expectations sometimes cause me to experience intense cognitive dissonance."

The dissonance, he said, results from "the universal love and outreach of Jesus to all, even sinners, versus a sense that homosexuality, if practiced, is against the teaching of Christianity." When people succeed in integrating their identities, Fr. Coleman said, it "will lead to something new, and for some, an oxymoron: a GLBT practicing Christian and practicing homosexual." That gives rise to the questions, he said, "Can you ordain them? Can you have holy union ceremonies?" The Jesuit policy, he said, is not *don't ask, don't tell*, but, rather, *do ask and do tell*. "You're not going to have integrated, mature sexuality unless you process it—and therefore yes, ask; yes, tell; yes, process."

It should not be thought that these are simply expressions of unhappiness with the instruction from Rome. What can only be described as Jesuit repudiation of the Church's teaching on homosexuality is considered and apparently entrenched in the leadership of the Society. *Theological Studies*, the Jesuit academic quarterly, publishes articles such as "The Open Debate: Moral Theology and the Lives of Gay and Lesbian Persons." Father James F. Keenan, S.J., professor of moral theology at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Massachusetts, leaves no doubt that he thinks it is a legitimate debate and it is wide open. He cites numerous gay and gay-friendly Catholic thinkers who agree with him. "In comparison to the other Christian churches, the Vatican's position has changed only a little even though a lively debate exists within the Church at every other level. The Vatican's teaching remains so because its contemporary exponents privilege as a condition of truthfulness a teaching's unchanged status."

Put differently, the "contemporary exponents," including John Paul II and Benedict XVI, impermissibly "privilege" their view on the assumption that two millennia of consistent Christian reflection and teaching may have a bearing on truthfulness. The authors whom Fr. Keenan favorably cites challenge the reluctance of the late moral theologian, Richard McCormick, also a Jesuit, to affirm that the homosexual condition and homogenital acts are "good and normal." It is said that McCormick has been outdated by developments that "initially appear threatening and disruptive" but lead to a recognition that "homosexuality can be a new name for its own embodying manifestation of Godlife." Pope John Paul's extensive writings on nuptial sexuality are criticized for "privileging gender complementarity and providing grounds for excluding the moral validity of expressed same-sex love."

Homosexuality was once viewed in terms of inversion, and Fr. Keenan is taken with the suggestion that we should find consolation "in God's revolutionary movements of inverting all things." He concludes his reflection with this:

> The open debate is an extensive one, occurring throughout the Catholic world. As they engage in this debate, moral theologians do not superficially validate personal lifestyles but rather propose a variety of criteria for assessing the morality of the way ordinary gay and lesbian persons live their lives. The debate helps us to see, then, that the Catholic tradition is rich, human, and capable of being relevant to help gay and lesbian persons find moral ways of living out their lives and the ways they are called to love. Gay and lesbian persons respond by offering, from their

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> experience, a variety of ways of imagining not only their own self-understanding, but the way we are called to be Church. Like other groups of people who have been oppressed by, among others, the Church, they help us to see that by silencing and marginalizing them, we do harm to them, ourselves, the Church, and the gospel.

Again, the Jesuits are not alone in proposing a thoroughly revisionist sexual morality. They seem to be the most outspoken, however, perhaps because they command more effective instruments of communication and control numerous colleges and universities in this country and elsewhere. Then too, and despite the Jesuits' diminishing numbers, prestige, and influence, there are still those who think the word "Jesuit" carries a certain intellectual cachet.

Also among those who accept the Church's sexual ethic, there are significant differences in the understanding of the recent instruction. Father Bruce Williams, a Dominican teaching at the Angelicum in Rome, writes that the term "homosexuality," as used in this and other Vatican documents, always has reference to genital acts—the doing of them or the desire to do them. Thus the instruction is not so much concerned with what might be called personality types but with people who act or are likely to act in ways clearly incompatible with living a life of chaste celibacy. Fr. Williams explains:

> These criteria [specified by the instruction] would appear not to exclude a good number of men who might be broadly described as "gay" in common parlance. Consider a man who was homogenitally active in the past and overcame or outgrew this activity in young adulthood. He still experiences warm affection toward men, but homogenital temptations are extremely infrequent and always dismissed quickly and easily. He has never been sexually attracted to women, though he relates normally and even warmly to them also. He does not participate or take an interest in "gay culture," though he does favor some particular political initiatives aimed at securing civil rights for homosexual people.
>
> He is comfortable with who he is by the grace of God, and wants to give himself to the Lord's service as a celibate priest. He is not "in the closet" about his sexuality, but sexual orientation does not enter into his self-definition; it simply is not an issue in his life, nor is he driven to make an issue of it in dealing with others. Many people might still label such a man as "gay"; he might even accept this designation, understanding it as an acknowledgment of some affectional and lightly erotic but essentially non-genital bearing toward other men. One could argue whether the appellation "gay" is appropriate here; but, as far as I can see, one cannot plausibly argue that this man has "deep-seated homosexual tendencies" or "supports gay culture" in the sense conveyed by the new Roman instruction.

As many cultural observers have noted, the success of the gay ideology in recent decades has almost obliterated the memory of those who used to be called bachelors. They were understood to be those who could get along, or preferred to get along, without sex or marriage. Today it is the entrenched cultural orthodoxy that, whatever the "orientation" of one's sexual desire, that desire and acting on that desire are essential to one's identity and psychological well-being. Fr. Williams offers the important reminder that, contra our sex-obsessed culture, there are many people, including men who discern a call to the priesthood, for whom sex is simply not that big a deal. (Studies indicate that that is also the case with many married couples, although some of them are a bit embarrassed about it.)

The Priestly Sacrifice

A somewhat different perspective is pressed by Bishop John D'Arcy of Fort Wayne, Indiana. D'Arcy has extensive experience in seminary formation, has been a bishop for thirty years, and is widely respected for his thoughtful straightforwardness. (Not incidentally, as an auxiliary bishop in Boston he many years ago raised the alarm about priestly sex abuse in the archdiocese. For his efforts, he was exiled to Fort Wayne in 1985.) In response to the Roman instruction, Bishop D'Arcy writes:

> To be happy, a priest must be convinced in his heart that he would be a good father and good husband. Like marriage, the priesthood involves making a gift of oneself to another. Pope John Paul II called it an *officium caritatus*, that is, an Office of Love. It cannot be an escape for someone who is afraid of marriage, believed he would not be happy in marriage or would not be a good spouse or father. The priest gives up something very beautiful—a lifelong relationship with a good woman, children, and grandchildren. [These are] needs that are deep within our humanity. He gives it up for something beautiful—to be a priest and shepherd after the heart of Christ. He must believe that Christ is calling him. It is a sacrifice. It's supposed to be a sacrifice. It is not a sacrifice in the same way for a person with deep-seated homosexual tendencies. He is not drawn to marriage in the same way. Thus, immediately, there is a division in the priesthood.
>
> Some have said that, if this document is implemented, it will lead to a shortage of priests. I do not believe that. I think the way out of the short-

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age is to ordain young men of quality—not supermen, which would eliminate all of us—but good men who would also make good husbands and fathers, and who can make a gift of themselves to others. These, in turn, will draw similar men.

"There is a division in the priesthood." I expect most bishops and priests would agree with that, and can cite chapter and verse from their own experience. Those who write about a "lavender mafia" that dominates some seminaries, chancery offices, and church bureaucracies may sometimes overstate the matter. But it is no surprise that like attracts like. Generally speaking, men who are attracted to men are attracted to men who are attracted to men. Sociologists call it elective affinity.

Father Bruce Williams, O.P., and Bishop D'Arcy both affirm the Church's teaching on human sexuality and welcome the new instruction. Fr. Williams titles his essay, "Rome and Gays: A Nuanced Response." Bishop D'Arcy says, in effect, that it is such nuance that got us into the present mess. While the Church must be loving and pastorally concerned in dealing with everyone, he says, when it comes to the priesthood, the word must go forth that the Church is looking for manly men.

Those who are sharply critical of the instruction are slicing and dicing definitions of "transitory" and "deep-seated" same-sex desires, and disingenuously claiming to be puzzled by what on earth the instruction can mean by "gay culture." By "gay culture" the instruction means the culture of which many of these critics are part. Particularly upsetting to some is the understanding that, if the criteria set forth by the instruction were applied when they were ordained, they would not have been ordained. The fact that they are priests, and that they think they are good priests, is, they say, decisive proof that gays can be good priests. It has a certain syllogistic charm.

The truth is that, by the criteria set out in the instruction, many who are priests today would not have been ordained. The further truth is that many of these men have turned out to be good and holy priests, despite the temptations attending the disability of same-sex attraction. The yet-further truth is that many are not good and holy priests. Rome has made a prudential judgment: With respect to giving candidates the benefit of the doubt, too many risks were taken in the past. The benefit of the doubt must now be given to protecting the integrity of the priesthood. With the new "normalization" of homosexuality in the general culture, with the acceptance of that normalization by many priests and not a few bishops, and with consequences such as the sex abuse scandals, the Church simply cannot afford to take the risks that were taken, frequently with the best intentions, in the past.

The Smell of Mendacity

There is a smell of mendacity surrounding much of the response to the instruction. The definitional slicing and dicing, the claim that the instruction means by "maturity" that one is happy being gay, rather than that, as it explicitly says, deep-seated same-sex desire is evidence of an "unfinished adolescence"—it is all evasion and mendacity. With many of the critics, it is possible to cut through the obfuscation by simply asking whether they accept the Church's teaching that homosexual desire is disordered and homogenital acts are intrinsically immoral. The emphasis here is not on the disorder but on the act. If it is agreed that the act is immoral, then it follows that the desire to commit the act is disordered. One cannot have a rightly ordered desire to do wrong.

Those who reject the instruction and the moral doctrine on which it is based—Jesuits being conspicuous but by no means alone—render a perversely valuable contribution. They have clarified what is at stake. Which brings us back to the Truce of 1968 and what could, God forbid, turn out to be the Truce of 2005. Although the instruction reiterates the consistent teaching of Scripture and tradition through the ages, and although the document is explicitly approved by the pope and issued by his authority, will it be allowed, as it was allowed with *Humanae Vitae*, for official representatives of the Church to reject the doctrine and the directives, and to do so with impunity? There can be no doubt that the rejectionists have thrown down the gauntlet in challenging the still-young pontificate of Benedict XVI.

Of course, the pope, because he is the pope, need not respond on the terms or within the timetable set by those who seem determined to precipitate a crisis of authority. But a discernible and decisive response is required if such a crisis is to be avoided. In the absence of a clear response, it is more than possible that the effective leadership of this pontificate, now just getting underway, will be gravely weakened.

Among those who greatly admired Cardinal Ratzinger and were elated by his election as pope, there is a palpable uneasiness. As of this writing, he has not made what are perceived to be needed personnel changes at the top levels of the Curia. Benedict's first major appointment, that of Archbishop William Levada to succeed him at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, occasioned widespread puzzlement. With particular pertinence to the present discussion,

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Levada, for all his considerable gifts, did not distinguish himself in his teaching, and his seeing to it that others taught, the Church's moral doctrine during his ten years as archbishop of San Francisco, a city commonly called the gay capital of the world.

Troubling also to those who watch this pontificate with hopeful concern is Benedict's appointment of George H. Niederauer as Levada's successor in San Francisco. While in Salt Lake City, Bishop Niederauer had a reputation of being, as it is said, gay-friendly. He broke with other religious leaders in opposing a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. The announcement of his appointment to San Francisco was met with great public rejoicing by Dignity, New Ways Ministry, and other gay advocacy groups.

In an interview with his diocesan paper in Salt Lake City, Niederauer seemed somewhat ambivalent about the recent Vatican instruction. He is asked about requisites for being ordained to the priesthood, and takes the aforementioned position of dissenters on what is meant by "affective maturity":

> *Nierderauer:* One implication is the need for what this document calls "affective maturity," meaning that all the loving and relating that a priest does must be centered in Christ and consistent with the priest's commitment to Christ and the Church. This kind of single-heartedness does not allow for a relationship in any priest's life that would weaken his commitment to Christ and his Church. Another implication of this affective maturity is that every celibate priest needs to be free to relate in a warm, human way to the men, women, and children to whom he ministers, in a manner that is genuine and still consistent with his commitment to Christ the Priest.
>
> *Interviewer:* That's all fine and good, but can a man who is homosexual be an effective priest?
>
> *Niederauer:* If any priest has the affective maturity described above, and in the document, then with God's grace, he can effectively minister as a priest. What the Church, the bishop, and the seminary must determine in the course of a priestly candidate's formation is whether the candidate has the gifts of affective maturity, has made them his own, and is living them out faithfully.

Bishop Niederauer does say, "In addition, it would be inconsistent for the priest and confusing for the Catholic faithful if a priest differs from the Church in any of its moral teachings." He does not say, at least in this interview, what that moral teaching is with respect to homosexuality, and, perhaps more significantly, he does not say what should be done, if anything, about priests who are inconsistent and causing confusion to the faithful; never mind that they are, according to Catholic teaching, imperiling their souls and the souls of others.

The statement by Niederauer that attracted most attention, however, was this: "Also, some who are seriously mistaken have named sexual orientation as the cause of the recent scandal regarding the sexual abuse of minors by priests." This is nothing short of astonishing. One can agree that it was not *the* cause, meaning the only cause. There is, for instance, the negligence and complicity of bishops, and of the seminaries in their charge. But to deny, as the bishop seems to be denying, a causal relationship between homosexual priests and the sexual abuse scandal is, well, astonishing. Research commissioned by the bishops themselves shows, as the whole world now knows, that more than 80 percent of the instances of abuse were with teenage boys and young men. It does not require a Ph.D. in psychology to recognize—although a Ph.D. in psychology might be helpful in denying—that men who want to have sex with boys are more likely to have sex with boys than men who do not want to have sex with boys.

Those who several years ago tried to deny the obviousness of the connection have, with notable exceptions, run out of delusions. Even the editors of *Commonweal* write:

> At least in this regard, Rome's concerns are not entirely misplaced. It is no secret that something went terribly wrong in U.S. seminaries in the late 1960s, the 1970s, and even into the 1980s. Both gay and straight priests, as well as former seminarians, acknowledge that, as many priests left to marry, the proportion of priests who were gay increased dramatically, and in some places, gay subcultures flourished. What role this breakdown in discipline and morality played in the sexual abuse of minors is not clear, but the idea that it played no role in a pattern of abuse in which 80 percent of the victims were male is untenable.

The appointment of Archbishop Levada to head CDF was certainly Benedict's decision, as was the appointment of Bishop Niederauer to succeed him in San Francisco. According to informed sources, the latter appointment was made on the recommendation of Archbishop Levada.

A Defining Test

And so it is that we are faced with what may be a defining test of the pontificate of Benedict XVI. As all who know him can attest, he is in personal relations a gentle man and averse to unpleasantness. He cannot relish the prospect of a direct confrontation with major institutions such as the Society of Jesus. Early

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on in his pontificate, John Paul II made an effort to bring the Jesuits into closer alignment with church teaching and authority, and ended up with little to show for it. As is his custom, the father general of the society, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, remains publicly aloof.

With this pope, as with all popes, there is the fear of schism. That was a great fear in 1968. Public confrontation would undoubtedly spark a media storm of historic proportions, but, after the dust settled, where would the rejectionists go? Lefebvrism of the left, whether in this country or elsewhere, cannot hold much appeal.

Roma locuta est, causa finita est. Or so the great Augustine is supposed to have said. With respect to homosexuality and the priesthood, Rome has spoken and the question is anything but settled. An official visitation of U.S. seminaries is currently underway, and is scheduled to be completed in May. The findings will be sent directly to the curial congregation that issued the recent instruction, and the next steps will be up to the congregation in response to the directives of the pope. But that does not address the question of what will be done, if anything, about theologians and priests, backed by bishops and religious orders, who have thrown down the gauntlet in publicly rejecting the Church's teaching and authority with respect to human sexuality.

In 1968, an effort was made to hold accountable those who are solemnly vowed to the service of the Church. And then Rome caved. We are still living with the unhappy consequences of the Truce of 1968. Of course the Church will survive. We have Our Lord's promise on that. But no one who cares about this pontificate and the integrity of the Church's ministry can contemplate with equanimity the consequences of a Truce of 2005.

FT

BONHOEFFER TODAY

Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, born in 1906 and martyred by the Nazis in April of 1945, has been depicted as an apostle of "religionless Christianity" and a radical opponent of tradition. Eberhard Bethge, his friend and biographer, has over the years vigorously protested this depiction. It is protested also by Bonhoeffer's own words, as witness this passage from *Ethics* on the decadence of Germany, and of the West, in the 1930s:

> If we now find ourselves obliged to raise precisely this question once again and to think it over afresh, we must first of all make it clear that we are here taking the concept of good in its widest sense, that is to say, simply as the contrary of vicious, lawless and scandalous, as the opposite of public transgression of the moral law, as good in contrast to the publican and harlot. Good, in this sense, contains an extremely wide range of gradations, extending from the purely external observance of good order to the most intimate self-examination and character-formation and to personal self-sacrifice for the most sublime human values. It was very necessary to protest against that bourgeois self-satisfaction which, by a convenient reversal of the gospel, considered being good simply as a preliminary to being Christian and which supposed that the ascent from being good to being Christian could be accomplished more or less without a break. This protest has, however, taken the form of an equally dangerous distortion of the gospel in the opposite sense which was brought forward in the most impassioned terms at various times in the course of the nineteenth century and then especially during the past twenty years. The justification of the good has been replaced by the justification of the wicked; the idealization of good citizenship has given way to the idealization of its opposite, of disorder, chaos, anarchy and catastrophe; the forgiving love of Jesus for the sinful woman, for the adulteress and for the publican, has been misrepresented, for psychological or political reasons, in order to make of it a Christian sanctioning of anti-social 'marginal existences,' prostitutes and traitors to their country. In seeking to recover the power of the gospel this protest unintentionally transformed the gospel of the sinner into a commendation of sin. And good, in its citizen-like sense, was held up to ridicule.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ The Christmas wars have come and gone. Until next December—or, more accurately, the start-up of the shopping season in late October. The wars received more attention than usual this time, with numerous localities dubbing Christmas trees as "holiday" trees or "winter" trees, which elicited widespread demands that Christmas be called Christmas. In response, major retailers reverted to "Merry Christmas" in advertising and greetings by sales personnel. Cultural critics reached to discover ironies in all this (irony being the paydirt of cultural criticism). For instance, Adam Cohen, writing in the *New York Times*, is

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excited by the discovery that the Puritans of Massachusetts despised Christmas as an unbiblical papist innovation. When, later, merchants discovered that money was to be made from the season, Christian leaders deplored its commercialization. Already in 1906, Mr. Cohen writes, the Jews of New York had the right idea about observing the season when they demanded the banning of Christmas carols from public schools. The de-Christianization of Christmas, he suggests, is the truly American way required "out of respect for the nation's religious diversity." But now, all of a sudden, you have these religious fanatics "with their campaign to make America more like a theocracy, with Christian displays on public property and Christian prayer in public schools." Forget about prayer in schools. The annual campaign to "Keep Christ in Christmas" goes back to the beginning of the discovery of the season's commercial possibilities. Mr. Cohen sides with the Puritans, forgetting that they knew a thing or two about theocracy. Not incidentally, they did not take kindly to Jews in their holy commonwealth. For a very different Jewish view of Christianity in our public life, I recommend the late Rabbi Jakob Petuchowski's "A Rabbi's Christmas" (FT, December 1991).

■ Rabbi Petuchowski was nothing if not Jewish, and he relished the carols, festivities, and pageantry of Christmas. He never missed watching on television the papal Midnight Mass from Rome. "Still all of that is a matter of mere externals," he wrote. "What really intrigues [me] is the fact that millions of [my] non-Jewish fellow human beings are celebrating the birthday of a *Jewish* child. And they are doing so by extolling the values of peace and good will. All the more misplaced . . . are the efforts by some supposedly Jewish organizations to arouse, through their battles against Christmas symbols in public places, the ill will and resentment of Christians—at the very time when the Christian religion, more than at other times of the year, inspires its followers with irenic and philanthropic sentiments." Rabbi Petuchowski notes that it is the Orthodox Jews from Eastern Europe who may have the most bitter memories of living in a "Christian society." But they are not the ones leading the charge against the public observance of Christmas. "In other words, what we are really dealing with in this annual battle against public Christian observance is not so much a 'Jewish' attack on that observance as it is a *secularist* one—with some of the prominent secularists identifying themselves as Jews. They are the same people who fight the use of public school facilities for meetings of high school religious-interest groups, and state support of private schools. They fight with equal vigor the attempts by other Jewish groups to have Jewish religious symbols exhibited alongside the Christian ones, such as the efforts of the Chabad (Lubavitch) group of Orthodox Jews to place a Hanukkah candelabrum on the public square when a Christmas tree is put there, which would be a fitting demonstration of America's religious pluralism. They are, in other words, not singling out Christianity. They are against the public manifestation of religion *per se*—even (or perhaps particularly) against the public manifestation of the religion of their own ancestors."

■ *Du bist Albert Einstein.* Germans are being treated to a television barrage of slick commercials aimed at elevating their self-esteem. Germans are feeling poorly about themselves. The economy is stagnant, the culture is in the doldrums, the churches are relics, and it seems nobody but Muslim immigrants is having babies. Forty years ago, German thinkers produced a "philosophy of the future" and "theology of the future." And now there is no future. One commercial says: "Beat your wings. Uproot trees. You are the wings. You are the tree. You are Germany." It is the fatuity of deep depression. Not many years ago, Germany was to be reinvigorated by the reunification of East and West. The West poured billions upon billions into the East, and it seems to have vanished without a trace. Richard Bernstein writes: "Now the westerners are unhappy because the disappearance of all that money is seen as the root of Germany's economic stagnation and high unemployment. The easterners are notoriously unhappy because life is less secure than it used to be under Communism, and, as this cycle continues, the westerners are irritated that the easterners are unhappy." In the nineteenth century, Germany was the model of high culture; in the twentieth, the archetype of barbarity. That was briefly followed by a celebrated economic miracle and success in democratic government. As Steven Ozment writes in *A Mighty Fortress*, Germans want so desperately to be a normal nation (While We're At It, November 2004). At the same time, they decided, couple by couple, not to have babies, not to have a future, not to have hope. It seems the last thing Germans need to hear is "Du bist Einstein."

■ St. Edmund Campion is a figure of monumental heroism in Catholic history and, more specifically, in the Jesuit tradition. A convert, scholar, and powerful preacher, he was, for his refusal to revert to the Church of England, put on the rack and executed at Tyburn on December 1, 1581. The University of San Francisco is an institution "in the Jesuit tradition." A notice from

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Dave Macmillan, vice president for "university advancement," alerts the faculty to the fact that Campion Hall will be renamed Kalmanovitz Hall. Paul Kalmanovitz was a beer and real-estate magnate, and the family foundation offered the university $7.5 million to renovate the hall if it would be renamed in his honor. The leadership of the university, however, is deeply devoted to St. Edmund Campion and the Jesuit tradition. Mr. Macmillan reports that "the university asked the foundation to upgrade its 'naming commitment' to $10 million." The foundation agreed. Campion Hall is now Kalmanovitz Hall. As Winston Churchill said to the offended lady, "We already know what you are. We are simply haggling over the price." Not to worry, however. Mr. Macmillan reassuringly notes that there are still tributes to St. Edmund Campion at other Jesuit institutions.

■ Several readers have suggested that I was unfair in my criticism of a statement signed by many evangelical Protestant leaders, "For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility." It would be a sad irony, I said, if evangelicals followed in the path of the old National Council of Churches in conflating the gospel with a political agenda, and that is true. But I should have said more about the merits of the statement. The document is comprehensive and considered. It tries hard to bridge conventional liberal/conservative, left/right divisions on many issues in dispute, and to do so without fudging disagreements. It recognizes that the Bible does not answer every question about the right ordering of society; that biblical witness must be joined to experience, reason, and attentiveness to something like natural law (although that last term is not used). On policy specifics there is little with which to disagree, in part because the document largely limits itself to generalizations and both/and affirmations. All in all, "For the Health of the Nation" is an encouraging response to Carl Henry's call of a half century ago for evangelicals to engage responsibly the cultural, social, and political tasks of our time. It is also a welcome answer to Mark Noll's observation that evangelical engagements in public tasks are too often "episodic and reactive." The statement seeks to provide a thoughtful framework for sustained commitment. And yet . . .

■ Disclaimers to the contrary, "For the Health of the Nation" gives an unwarranted priority to the political. "Disengagement is not an option," we are told. Maybe not for Christians in general, but some Christian vocations are rightly disengaged from the political task. Then the signers say their commitments constitute "the platform for evangelicals to engage in common action." Should churches have political platforms? While the statement calls for humility, it may not be unfair to detect a touch of hubris at points. For instance, "We make up fully one quarter of all voters in the most powerful nation in history." Is this the language of the little flock to whom Our Lord promises the kingdom, or of the principalities and powers of the present time? If evangelicals do not assert the lordship of Christ over the world, it is said at another point, the result would be "to functionally abandon it to the Evil One." Is it then the case that the lordship of Christ is dependent upon us? If we do not rule, it is then the case that not Christ but the Evil One rules? The statement urges Christians "to speak prophetically to society," but the certification of prophets and the discernment of prophecies is left unclear. Christians, we are told, "bring a unique vision" to politics, but there is no policy mentioned that is not supported also by non-Christians. Instead of insisting upon their uniqueness, should not Christians cultivate a vision of justice that God has imprinted on the hearts of all? Personal conversion and social transformation are repeatedly put on what would seem to be the same plane. Environmental concern is urged by invoking the great eschatological vision of Romans 8 ("the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay"), which, the statement says, "teaches us that God is not only redeeming his people but is also restoring the whole creation." I expect St. Paul would be surprised by the lesson drawn: "[Christians] shape their personal lives in creation-friendly ways: practicing effective recycling, conserving resources, and experiencing the joy of contact with nature." This is what is meant by "the glory that is to be revealed to us"? While at one point recognizing that government cannot do everything, we are told that "it is not the primary role of government to provide everything that humans need for their well-being." Is it then the secondary role, perhaps? "God's prophets call his people to create just and righteous societies." That is followed by references to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos. The apparent assumption is that Christians are in the same prophetic relationship to American society as were the Old Testament prophets to Israel of old.

■ Let me say it again: "For the Health of the Nation" is an admirable statement in many respects. I agree with almost all its policy recommendations. But some of its formulations are infelicitous, and others theologically mischievous or incoherent. Lacking a developed ecclesiology, "the church" is proposed as God's lobby for the New Israel that America is or is to become. Almost entirely absent is St. Augustine's awareness of the pilgrim City of God in ambiguous interaction

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with the politics of the city of man that is in bondage to the *libido dominandi* of earthly powers. And yes, it is in important ways similar to the putatively prophetic pronouncements of the old National Council of Churches in its proposal of a political platform that presumably claims the allegiance of all who acknowledge the lordship of Christ. Some of the policy lyrics are different—most significantly on the protection of human life at every stage of development and decline—but the melody is troublingly familiar. "For the Health of the Nation" is a welcome effort to provide a comprehensive framework for sustained evangelical engagement in public affairs. But half a century after Carl F.H. Henry issued his challenge, evangelicals are no longer newly arrived refugees from their fundamentalist exile. Given the current influence and responsibility of evangelicals, they, their fellow-Christians, and their fellow-citizens are entitled to something better than this.

■ Here is something really fine. It is an eminently accessible and informed introduction to one of the greatest questions facing our society, and every mortal in our society, which means all of us. *Taking Care: Ethical Caregiving in Our Aging Society* is published by the President's Council on Bioethics. Leon Kass, past chairman of the council, writes: "As a society, we have not yet faced up to this difficulty especially in its human dimensions. And the popular legal instruments that we are being encouraged to employ to avoid the problem will fall short of what we need as individuals. As this report points out in great detail, living wills, drafted years in advance, are not the answer. They simply cannot substitute for reliable and responsible caregivers on the spot, devoted to the welfare of the incapacitated person here and now. Even worse is the deadly 'solution' of legalizing assisted suicide and euthanasia, advocates for which are again active in several state legislatures. Caring wholeheartedly for a frail patient or a disabled loved one is incompatible with thinking that engineering their death is an acceptable 'therapeutic option.' Betrayal and abandonment of the elderly can never be part of a decent and compassionate society, one devoted to the equal worth and dignity of every human life, from start to fish, regardless of personal strengths, weaknesses, or disabilities." There is in prospect a great conflict. "As we bend our efforts in support of the elderly, we can ill afford to neglect the needs of the young, who, unlike the old, have no organized voice to speak up for their needs. We must at all costs avoid a conflict between the generations over scarce resources." But be assured that this is not a book of sweeping policy generalizations. In its three-hundred-plus pages, it treats in detail the problems encountered in growing older and more dependent, and addresses with moral wisdom the difficult decisions to be made about care toward the end of life. I have come across no single book that covers so much so well of a subject of inevitable interest to all of us. (For a copy of *Taking Care*, write the President's Council on Bioethics, 1801 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006, or visit *www.bioethics.gov.*)

■ Poland, with a population of forty million, is the largest of the ten states recently joining the European Union. I recently wrote here about whether Poland would, on crucial social, cultural, and economic questions, be more influenced by or be an influence on the EU. A little test came in December when the Polish delegation erected a pro-life exhibit in a corridor of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Parliamentarians from France and elsewhere protested vigorously and the exhibit was promptly removed. As a result of Poland's presence, said British parliamentarian Michael Cashman, "On women's rights and gay equality, we are fighting battles that we thought we had won years ago." Poland's low-tax and growth-oriented economic policies are also seen as a threat to the stagnating economies of such as Germany and France. As if that were not enough, the Poles were more assertive than the EU thought necessary in supporting democracy in Ukraine, and, in their support for U.S. foreign policy, seem not to understand what the EU is for. "We want to see Europe based on a Christian ethic," says Maciej Giertych, one of the ten Polish members of the EU parliament. Of the intolerance displayed in the removal of the pro-life exhibit, he says, "It reminds us of what we had in Poland before 1989."

■ Forget his use of the ugly and misleading phrase "organized religion." You know what he means. Stephen Prothero of Boston University is reviewing *Restless Souls* by Leigh Eric Schmidt, professor of religion at Princeton. Schmidt takes the side of the many "seekers" who are into "spirituality" and can't give the time of day to "religion." Prothero writes: "One of the grand conceits of the Spiritual Left is that each of us can (and should) invent our own spirituality, which to be authentic must also be unborrowed. But the meditation techniques and yoga postures so loved among spirituality's champions did not spring forth fully formed from the genius of any American. They were cultivated over millennia by Hindus and Buddhists in India and Tibet and Japan, who were themselves sustained in those practices by institutions and clerics and everything else that [Ralph Waldo] Emerson loved to

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hate. Mr. Schmidt knows this, of course. And at a few points he seems to sense the irony of foisting an intellectual genealogy on folks who, like Charlie Brown and his friends, fancy themselves parentless. In the end, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that there is in contemporary American spirituality more than a modicum of the feckless teenager who imagines that his foolish parents have bequeathed him nothing except perhaps a new car. The problem with this conceit is not simply that it is historically inaccurate or that it fails to give credit where credit is due. The problem—and this should matter more to spirituality's friends than to its enemies—is that spirituality depends very much on organized religion, since each of its key characteristics (even its disdain for religion itself) was created and sustained by religious believers operating inside religious institutions and for religion's sake. What is missing from this otherwise intelligent book is a hard-headed engagement with the broader question of spirituality's provenance, specifically its symbiotic relationship with organized religion itself. Spirituality is not so much an alternative to religion as a part of it. Should the prophesy of the Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier ever come to pass—that 'altar, church, priest, and ritual will pass away'—spirituality would go with them."

■ The sprightly newsletter *catholic eye* notes that during the Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist the *New York Times'* Rome correspondent reported that the Eucharist is "the sacrament of bread and wine in which believers commune with the body and blood of Christ." On another day, he reported that it is "the Catholic rite in which the sacrament of bread and wine are distributed." The editors of *catholic eye* apparently do not understand that the *New York Times* is a newspaper where a reporter's ignorance of a subject is considered a qualification. I'm not making this up. More than one person at the *Times* has explained to me that having someone report on a subject with which he is not familiar provides a fresh and unbiased perspective, and makes it more likely his reporting will be readily understood by non-specialists. That is not the policy on really important subjects, mind you, such as science, the Supreme Court, and same-sex marriage. But it will do for religion. It is perhaps noteworthy that, in this case, the reporter and his editors assume that readers of the *Times* will not know what the Eucharist is. Perhaps so, which says a great deal about the readers whom the *Times* assures us are highly educated. In any event, it is striking that a reporter covering a three-week deliberation on the Eucharist comes up with descriptions that nobody in the synod would recognize as the subject of their deliberation.

■ William Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore is interviewed by John Allen on Jewish-Catholic relations, a long-time passion with the Cardinal. Keeler tells the story of John Paul II's refusing the request of a Catholic couple to baptize a child whom they had rescued from the Holocaust but who had Jewish parents who may still have been living. "In my view," says Keeler, "that's the big difference between the situation now and 150 years ago, when Pius IX did not hesitate to claim a Jewish child for the Church." Well, not quite. The big difference, one might respectfully note, is that in that much-publicized nineteenth-century instance the child was already baptized, the country's law forbade Catholic children to be raised by Jews, and the boy, effectively adopted by Pius IX, went on to become a priest and declared himself forever grateful for the intervention of the pope. Pius IX, in short, was responding to a very different situation from that addressed by John Paul II. John Allen goes on to ask about the delicate question of conversion in the Jewish-Catholic dialogue. His Eminence responds: "We speak to them now as beloved elder brothers and sisters in the faith. Obviously, if an individual Jew should be persuaded that the Catholic-Christian faith is where God is calling him or her, our teaching on religious liberty means that choice must be respected, and we will receive that person with great joy." It is not evident why it should be an occasion of great joy if nothing more than the exercise of religious liberty is involved. John Allen presses on: "You use the verb 'persuaded,' which begs the question. Should we be attempting to persuade Jews?" Keeler: "The Church has no organization directed to the conversion of the Jews at this time. I think that's the most I can say on that question." Allen then changes the subject. It would seem, however, that a great deal more can and should be said about conversion. The magisterial teaching of the Church—powerfully set forth in, for instance, the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*—is that we are under the mandate to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone. The Second Vatican Council states that those who are persuaded that the Catholic Church is what she claims to be must, in order to be saved, enter into and remain in full communion with her. Among the children of Abraham, Jews are indeed our elder brothers. According to Romans 9:11, we are to revere God's abiding covenant with Israel. One unfortunate interview does not detract from Cardinal Keeler's many contributions to Jewish-Catholic relations, but after more than thirty years of dialogue, the Jews and Christians involved should have achieved a level of mutual trust that precludes nervousness about truth claims in tension and sometimes in conflict. Of course Christians hope and pray that all, including

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Jews, will come to accept the fullness of truth revealed in Jesus Christ. We need not condescend to our Jewish interlocutors by fudging that fact of the faith. Nor does that fact diminish all that Jews and Christians have in common that is worth dialoguing about until Christ returns in glory, at which time the great question between us will be definitively settled. The counsel of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel is ever pertinent: "Interfaith dialogue begins with faith."

■ Coming out this month is Thomas Oden's *Turning Around the Mainline: How Renewal Movements are Changing the Church* (Baker Press). This is undoubtedly an important book. Oden, a United Methodist, was for many years professor of theology at Drew University and has made inestimable contributions to Evangelicals and Catholics Together. Many have assumed that the drift and decline of the mainline/oldline Protestant churches—United Methodist, Presbyterian USA, Episcopal, United Church of Christ, ELCA Lutheran, *et al.*—is unstoppable. As his title suggests, Oden enters a vigorous dissent. Writing, as he says, more as an archivist than as a historian, he documents the decades-long efforts within these bodies to return them to a center of theological orthodoxy and moral sobriety. The goal is to restore their confessional identities and sense of mission, but without the "denominational rivalries" of the past. Oden has elsewhere written at length about the possibility of reconstituting confessional integrity on the basis of the "consensual tradition" of the first millennium of Christian history. He is sanguine about the possibility of achieving this goal. Some would say he is naively sanguine, but, as he documents in the present volume, many people have been working at this for a very long time, and not without some encouraging results. He repeatedly says that the goal does not include "organic union" among the churches. This would seem to preclude the goal of "full communion" as understood by Catholics and others, where full communion means unity in faith, sacraments, and ordered ministry. But perhaps not. As you might imagine, Tom Oden and I have discussed these questions frequently and at length. I have serious reservations about the theological coherence of his "consensual tradition" and the ecumenical coherence of his vision of a mainline/oldline renewed. Nonetheless, *Turning Around the Mainline* is an indispensable introduction to the people and organizations who are determined not to despair of the denominations that they love.

■ The morning service at Harvard University's Memorial Church is strictly limited to fifteen minutes, of which the sermon gets no more than five. Harvey Mansfield, professor of government, packed a lot into his allotted time, including this: "Both science and religion seek truth, and both respond to human needs. Science responds to the human need for power. We need power because we are weak; without science we cannot protect ourselves securely against the risks to which we are exposed by our mortality. With science we have the means, in Francis Bacon's phrase, for 'the relief of man's estate.' Religion, too, must face the fact of death, but it does so differently, in a spirit of gratitude. The Christian religion says that though life is imperfect, life is sweet because man is made in the image of God. When we consider the divinity within us we are reminded that life is good, life is a gift—but also that we are imperfect in goodness as well as in power. We yearn for perfection in both goodness and power. Science offers only an increase in power and has no way to understand goodness, let alone produce it. For all its wonderful benefits it cannot tell you what is a benefit, what not. Science believes in progress and has no gratitude for the past. It feels no debt to St. Jerome and others from the so-called Dark Ages who preserved philosophy—hence science—when it could have been extinguished. The Christian religion, or any religion concerned with both goodness and power, is wiser, more sophisticated, and more responsible than our modern science. As individuals, scientists are not mad for power, but the enterprise of science is sure, though sure it cannot prove, that more power from science is good for humanity. In its confusion science must settle for the condition of a captive woman who, if fortunate in her captor, may become, said St. Jerome, 'a woman of Israel.'"

■ There is such a glut of biopathology passing itself off as biography that one welcomes a writer who is not sniffing through the laundry of the great to turn up dirty little secrets. Such a writer is Morton N. Cohen, the biographer of Charles Dodgson, also known as Lewis Carroll, author of *Alice in Wonderland* and other stories for children of all ages. In a recent issue of the *Times Literary Supplement* Cohen surveys the scholarly and pseudo-scholarly literature on Carroll, much of it filled with innuendos and slanders, most notably that he had a very unhealthy thing for prepubescent girls. Cohen's conclusion is emphatic: "Charles Dodgson's life is well documented. We have eleven volumes of diaries and a large number of his letters. Yet, in spite of all the evidence, we still cannot chart his affections as clearly as we would like to, and how they may have changed. We do know, however, from the mountain of records, that in spite of his private needs, he would never choose to hurt anyone. His life is a monument to kindness, to doing things for

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others. He was an uncompromising Christian who practiced what he preached. He knew full well that if he ever violated his own strict ethical code, he would not be able to live with himself." I have not and do not intend to read all the books pushing conclusions to the contrary. I think—and in part I think because I prefer to think—that Cohen is right. It is a preference closely related to what used to be known as the virtue of charity.

■ Political liberalism as a doctrine is not what is meant by being politically liberal in today's America. The doctrine—which has to do with such things as checks and balances, representative government, tolerance, and individual rights—is, many claim, quite thoroughly at odds with what is now usually meant by liberalism. But that is another discussion. Christopher J. Insole, a Cambridge theologian, is responding to the attack on political liberalism, the doctrine, launched by a theological movement called Radical Orthodoxy, of which John Milbank is the foremost champion. Writing in *Modern Theology*, Insole says: "There is something regrettably shrill about the broadside given by Milbank in his recent *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon*, where he comments that 'political liberalism . . . engenders today an increasingly joyless and puritanical world.' Indeed, such a world is marked by a 'totalitarian drift and may always become really totalitarian at the point where its [political liberalism's] empty heart is besieged by an irrational cult of race, class, science, style, or belief.' This is just wrong. Any careful attention to political liberalism—on the conceptual or historical level—makes evident that the finest instinct of political liberals is not an emptying of their hearts, nor is it a slide towards 'totality' in order to 'confirm . . . free-will as such' and identify it with the good. It is rather that political liberals make room in their hearts and in the heart of society—out of love, humility and charity—so as to allow for a diverse range of incompatible but humanely possible identifications of the good. It is not always clear that 'Radical Orthodoxy' has room for such generosity, at least in its more extravagant flourishes. It is perhaps time for theologians to reckon more strenuously and charitably with the highest possibilities and motivations of political liberalism, as well as exposing its manifest failings, historical debasement and concrete problems. Christian theologians legitimately complain when 'Christianity' is judged by its worst historical and concrete moments, and ask critics instead to reckon with Christianity's higher aspirations and deepest truths. One might do well to extend this same courtesy to other traditions, such as political liberalism." There is among ideologues, including Christian ideologues, a propensity for attributing to a disfavored "system" the failings and frustrations of the human condition. For Marx it was capitalism, for conservatives of a libertarian bent it is socialism. In this country, Stanley Hauerwas and his disciples, who are usually on what is perceived to be the left, share with Theonomists, usually on the right, a passionate animus against the liberal democratic order. Theonomists—a.k.a. Dominionists or Reconstructionists—share with the late R.J. Rushdoony a belief that our constitutional order is fundamentally misbegotten and the nation should be reconstituted on the basis of "Bible law." (See my article "Why Wait for the Kingdom? The Theonomist Temptation," May 1990.) While proposing very different alternatives to our putatively misbegotten political order, the anti-liberals of the left and right are both lacking in an Augustinian sense of our creaturely limits within a fallen creation that is far short of the historical realization of the promised Kingdom. Insole is right: humility is needed. Which is in no way to be confused with wimpishness.

■ Googling "John Rawls" and "justice," one comes up with a few hundred thousand references. That's a lot, but I thought there would be many more. No book on political philosophy has been so widely discussed in recent decades as Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*. Critics have noted that Rawls tends to skirt the most controverted question of justice in our public life, namely, abortion. Most have assumed that his theory favors an almost unlimited abortion license. In a 1997 book, *Moral Status*, Mary Anne Warren challenged that assumption, arguing that Rawls' position on "the basis of human equality" leads directly to the conclusion that human embryos have the same basic moral rights as human infants. Now Russell DiSilvestro of Bowling Green State University supports and further develops that challenge. Not only Rawls' understanding of equality but also what he says about "paternalism"—meaning concern for those who are not present participants in deliberating in what he calls "the original position," the requirements of a just society—leads to a thoroughly Rawlsian interest in protecting the unborn. Writing in the *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, DiSilvestro concludes: "Finally, the proper treatment of the human embryo has been an issue of public policy deliberation for many years now. In such deliberation, the claim is often made that one's private moral or religious convictions should not be invoked when deliberating over the way state institutions operate. Sometimes this claim is backed up by either explicit or implicit reliance upon Rawls' own concept of 'public reason,' and it is often assumed that when this

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claim is taken seriously, there is not much moral status to be ascribed to the human embryo. But if Rawls' own writings about justice lead to a conservative view on the moral status of the human embryo, it follows that one need not rely on any moral or religious positions outside of those Rawls himself assumes in order to invoke this conservative view in forming public policies."

■ Readers who've been around for a while know that my August spell at the family cottage in Quebec is the annual occasion for my re-reading and re-thinking a major chunk of the western canon. This year, as in 1999, it was the plays of Shakespeare. Reading Shakespeare again was greatly enhanced by *Shakespeare After All*, a marvelous book by Marjorie Garber of Harvard (Pantheon). Little wonder that her lectures are packed as she goes through all the plays one by one with erudite brio and an irrepressible delight in the genius of the Bard. Now that she has published all her lectures on the plays, what is she going to do for a follow-up in the lecture hall? Not to worry; her delight and passion for discovery are obviously inexhaustible, and I would not be surprised if, a few years from now, we are graced with another thousand-page tome. Garber knows all about the postmodernist deflations, the feminist revisionisms, and Marxist deployments of the plays, and she gives them a nod in passing while never being deflected from the main subject of what they meant in the time when they were written, what they say about the times about which they were written, and how they have been understood in subsequent readings and performances up to the present. She notes the claim of many scholars that Shakespeare was a Catholic but while acknowledging the family connections faithful to the "old religion," stops short of endorsing the claim. She is alert to the Christian and specifically biblical references that elude, or are ignored by, many other commentators. On that score, upon first reading, I thought she was reaching in several instances but, upon reflection, was persuaded. In this connection and others, she is much more persuasive than Harold Bloom in his book of a few years ago, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. The greatness of the man was not in "inventing human personality," as Bloom would have it, but in reworking the vast and varied traditions, including those of Greece and Rome, as refracted through the Christian sensibilities of his time—and, for the most part, of our time. Paul, Augustine, and—as Robert Alter has recently demonstrated, the writers of the Old Testament—formed the understanding of human personality so brilliantly explored and displayed by Shakespeare. But enough. Marjorie Garber's *Shakespeare After All* is that rare book that puts one on guard against excessive aggressiveness in pressing it upon others.

■ We hope to give further attention to David Albert Jones' *The Soul of the Embryo: An Inquiry into the Status of the Human Embryo in the Christian Tradition* (Continuum), but I was struck by Anthony Kenny's review in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Kenny, former vice-provost at Oxford, admires Jones' historical scholarship but disagrees with him that a human being exists from the moment of conception. Others share Kenny's view that, since before fertilization there are two entities (two different gametes) and after fertilization there is a single entity (a zygote), the point at which one entity (a single embryo) splits into two entities (two identical twins) is of defining importance in determining whether a human life (or lives) has been unjustly taken. As I say, this is not a new argument, but I confess I have never found it persuasive. The morally pertinent fact, I would suggest, is that destroying the embryo before the fourteen-day possibility of twinning is destroying one or more human beings. This on the premise that nothing that is not a human being has the potential of becoming a human being, and nothing that has the potential of becoming a human being is not a human being. Whether the embryo before fourteen days is one human being or might turn out to be two or three human beings is morally beside the point. Having said that, however, one is impressed by the straightforwardness of Kenny's conclusion: "David Albert Jones is a skilled and fair-minded advocate for the position that individual life begins at conception. However, in my view, his arguments fail to weaken the case for placing the origin of personhood somewhere around the fourteenth day of pregnancy. But there are two sides to the reasoning that leads to that conclusion. If the course of development of the embryo gives good reason to believe that before the fourteenth day it is not an individual human being, it gives equally good reason to believe that after that time it *is* an individual human being. If so, then late abortion is indeed homicide—and abortion becomes 'late' at an earlier date than was ever dreamt of by Aquinas."

■ A procrastinating preacher who takes exception to my rule in *Freedom for Ministry* defends himself by reference to this from St. Augustine. "Look, here I am, now speaking to you; before I came to you here, I gave some thought beforehand to what I am going to say to you" (Sermon 225). Yes, my friend, but we're not St. Augustine. I'll stick to my rule: "If by Tuesday morning you haven't started thinking about Sunday's homily, you are a day behind schedule."

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■ "The fundamental problem is never the sword, but the hand that wields it—not the weapons, but the frail human spirit, so easily overcome by *furor* rather than guided by *pietas.*" In this essay, which appeared in the *New Atlantis*, Gilbert Meilaender is reflecting on an essay by Simone Weil in which she portrays the ways in which both conqueror and conquered are turned by war into "things." Meilaender again: "Rightly understood, the limits of just war exist to make war a thinkable and human undertaking, to remind us that *techne* must be controlled by human moral purpose. And, ironically, we are most likely to exercise such moral control if we do not suppose that we can easily master or possess the technical capacities that are our own invention. 'War first became total in the minds of men,' Paul Ramsey once wrote. He meant that total war—being possessed by force in a way that makes us blind momentum—is not the result of technology. It is the result of supposing—always falsely—that everything is within our power. We stand at a time when many particular questions—the meaning of just cause, the nature of permissible preemption, the responsibilities of nation states, the limits and possibilities of humanitarian intervention, the meaning of 'precision' weapons—are being rethought, often to very good ends. Precisely that is the work of just war theory, which is never simply static. But we sometimes imagine that its purpose is chiefly to help us identify—after the fact—guilty parties. No doubt it may sometimes help with that task, but more important is the framework it provides as we try to think in advance about the dangers and temptations we may face. We are tempted, on the one hand, to suppose that *techne* creates its own moral world, and that we must conform to it or opt out of global responsibilities. We are tempted, on the other hand, to be enslaved by the world of force, supposing that everything is within our power. How we find our way through these dual temptations will determine, in large measure, the character of American empire. Recent discussions of the morality of war—especially Roman Catholic discussions—have fostered the notion that just war thinking requires a 'presumption against war.' This is not, I think, a very helpful way of putting the matter, though it is trying to get at something important. A simple presumption against war would sometimes mean an unwillingness to seek justice—and a willingness to permit force to rule. It would decline to compel tyrants to hesitate before the human countenance of those whom they oppress, torture, and kill. What we need is not a presumption against war but the humility that prays for grace to be freed from the enslaving power of force—a power that would make things of us all, even and especially in fleeting moments of triumph. For, as Weil writes, a man 'cannot experience force without being touched by it to the very soul. Grace can prevent this touch from corrupting him, but it cannot spare him the wound.' Only as we are prepared to ask for such grace should we be trusted to place our *techne* in service of force."

■ Charles Porterfield Krauth was a Lutheran historian and theologian of distinction. This is from his *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*. It is the more impressive for its having been written in 1871. "Hence the Church of England has been more depleted than any other by secessions. Either the Anglican Church must come to more fixedness in doctrine or to more pliableness in form, or it will go on, through cycle after cycle of disintegration, toward ruin. In this land, which seems the natural heritage of that Church which claims the Church of England as its mother, the Protestant Episcopal Church is numerically smallest among the influential denominations. Its great social strength and large influence in every direction only render more striking the fact that there is scarcely a Church, scarcely a sect, having in common with it an English original, which is not far in advance of it in statistical strength. Some of the largest communions have its rigidity of form, some of the largest have its looseness in doctrine; but no other communion attempts to combine both. The numbers of those whom the Church of England have lost are millions. It has lost to Independency, lost to Presbyterianism, lost to Quakerism, lost to Methodism, lost to Romanism, and lost to the countless forms of Sectarianism of which England and America, England's daughter, have been, beyond all nations, the nurses. The Church of England has been so careful of the rigid old bottle of the form, yet so careless or so helpless as to what the bottle might be made to hold, that the new wine which went into it has been attended in every case by the same history—the fermenting burst the bottle and the wine was spilled. Every great religious movement in the Church of England has been attended ultimately by an irreplaceable loss in its membership. To this rule there has been no exception in the past. Whether the present movement which convulses the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in America is to have the same issue, belongs, perhaps, rather to the prophet's eye than to the historian's pen. Yet to those who, though they stand without, look on with profound sympathy, the internal difficulties which now agitate those Churches seem incapable of real, abiding harmonizing. True compromise can only sacrifice preferences to secure principles. The only compromise which seems possible in the Anglican Churches would be one which would sacrifice princi-

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ples to secure preferences, and nothing can be less certain of permanence than preferences thus secured. These present difficulties in the Anglican Churches proceed not from contradiction of its principles, but from development of them. These two classes of seeds were sown by the husbandmen themselves—that was the compromise. The tares may grow till the harvest, side by side with the wheat, with which they mingle, but which they do not destroy, but the thorns which choke the seed must be plucked up or the seed will perish. Tares are men; thorns are moral forces of doctrine or of life. The agitation in the Anglican Churches can end only in the victory of the one tendency and the silencing of the other, or in the sundering of the two. In Protestantism nothing is harder than to silence, nothing easier than to sunder. If the past history of the Anglican Church, hitherto unvaried in the ultimate result, repeat itself here, the new movement will end in a formal division, as it already has in a moral one. The trials of a Church which has taken a part in our modern civilization and Christianity which entitles it to the veneration and gratitude of mankind, can be regarded with indifference only by the sluggish and selfish, and with malicious joy only by the radically bad." To which Episcopalian readers may say, "Ah yes, but that's precisely the point. He said that in 1871. Newman said it as well or better in the 1840s. But behold, we are still here." One cannot, in a manner of speaking, entirely dismiss that riposte, can one?

■ Brace yourself for some good news. I had been noticing it for the last several years, and others said they, too, thought it to be the case. There are more babies in Manhattan. Infants in strollers, toddlers in stores, obviously pregnant women are all over the place. The impression turns out to be true. In the last four years, the number of children under five in Manhattan has increased by 26 percent. That compares with an 8 percent increase in all five boroughs. The increase is not among Mexicans, Dominicans, and various immigrant groups. Their birth-rates have declined slightly. The dramatic increase is among affluent professionals who are deciding to have babies. Manhattan is an expensive place to live. Preschools charge $23,000 per year. An outfit called Private School Advisors charges parents $6,000 to coach parents on how to get their child admitted to preschool. "Manhattan has always been a great place for raising your children," says Lori Robinson who heads up the New Mommies Network. "It's easier to be in the city with a baby. It's less isolation. You feel you are part of society." She doesn't go quite so far as to say so, but it's almost as though having children is, well, natural. Who says Manhattan is not part of the real world?

■ Historian David Hollinger of Berkeley likes the book, which is not surprising in view of his judgment that it is a very good thing that American intellectual elites in the last half century and more have turned away from a dying Christian tradition to engage the thoroughgoing secularism of the European mind. His endorsement notwithstanding, *Jews and the American Soul* (Princeton University Press) by Andrew R. Heinze is a richly researched and fascinating study. Against the "myth" of ours being a Protestant culture, he posits the thesis that over the last century psychotherapy, in its various forms and largely under Jewish direction, has redefined the dominant ways in which Americans understand human nature and the self—*i.e.*, "the American soul." Jews were the outsiders who became the insiders, and once inside they changed the house rules. "It is hard to believe," Heinze writes, "that a few hundred professionals could change the culture of a nation, but that is what happened in the United States after the Second World War." Psychotherapy under Jewish auspices redefined negative stereotypes as signs of health. "To reckon with the myths and realities of Jewish neurosis, these popular psychologists emphasized the psychologically crippling effects of religious persecution and orthodox dogma, defended the neurotic as a creative force in society, and presented the once-ghettoized Jew as an exemplar of psychic survival in modern civilization." A great strength of the book is the profiles of major players in this drama, ranging from Freud and Adler to Abraham Maslow and popularizers such as Rabbi Joshua Liebman (*Peace of Mind*), Rabbi Harold Kushner (*When Bad Things Happen to Good People*) and columnists Ann Landers and Joyce Brothers. Situating the fertile ground for psychotherapy in several older Jewish traditions, Heinze relates the ways in which Jews tried to protect and advance themselves by undermining Christianity and, in many cases, religion more generally. Liberally religious Jews such as Liebman and Kushner radically modified Christian understandings of God and the self, while others frontally assaulted Christ as "crazy" and Christianity as irredeemably pathological. The author's limited knowledge of Catholicism results in a disappointingly biased account of efforts by Fulton J. Sheen and Clare Boothe Luce to popularize an alternative understanding of mental health. In any event, the Catholics were outgunned. Heinze writes, "Perhaps the simplest measure of the difference between Jewish and Catholic perceptions of psychotherapeutics was the fact that Jews constituted a large proportion of psychoanalysts and Catholics did not, even though there were many more Catholics than Jews in America." Jews had more therapists and more people in therapy.

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In the 1960s a survey "found that nearly two-thirds of the people who came to psychoanalytic clinics in New York were Jews." Toward the end of his long and intriguing study, Heinze writes: "More specifically—and we cannot emphasize this point enough—we have seen that the emergence of America's powerful psychological or 'therapeutic' culture was not simply a secularization of a once-Protestant society or a shift away from the Protestant work ethic toward a 'culture of narcissism.' Beneath the great shift in American culture toward psychological evaluations of human conduct was a dynamic interaction between Jews and Christians and a dynamic tension between Jewish and Christian values." In that dynamic tension—sometimes depicted in terms a culture war—the conclusion is that the Jews won. Elsewhere, Heinze admits that, in his focus on Jews, he may have downplayed the role of Christian psychotherapists, but that does not significantly change the result, namely "the triumph of the therapeutic," as Philip Rieff dubbed it in his classic 1966 book by that title. In placing so much emphasis on bestselling books by Jews, I believe that Heinze also overlooks the vast and still-growing market served by Christian literature of a therapeutic nature. Yet there is no doubt that Jewish understandings of mental and spiritual health, both religious and anti-religious, have been massively insinuated also into that market. *Jews and the American Soul* is important reading for people who are trying to puzzle through what has happened to American culture in the last hundred years, and especially since World War II.

■ The original language of Christianity is translation. So says Lamin Sanneh, professor of missions and world religions at Yale Divinity School, in a lecture at Santa Clara University, California. "Christianity is the most pluralist and diverse of the religions of the world," and it is that because it is the most portable, appropriating all the languages and cultures of the world. As does Philip Jenkins in his rightly acclaimed *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity,* Sanneh underscores the explosion of Christianity in the southern hemisphere. "We are witnesses," he says, "to a seismic shift in religious history." The shift is from the "heartland" (Europe and America) to the "frontier" (Asia, Latin America, and Africa), and the greatest explosion is yet to come when and if China relaxes its repression of religion—which is more a matter of when than if. John Paul the Great understood what was happening, says Sanneh. "John Paul II responded to these momentous changes by affirming Catholicism as the church on the frontier, not just as the church in its European heartland. A spell was broken, and the peoples of the world arose to claim the heritage as their own. Few people in Europe or North America were prepared for this, so common was the assumption that Europe is the faith, in the famous words of Hilaire Belloc (*Europe and the Faith*). But Pope John Paul stepped into that new role with the natural flair of a brilliant pioneer, affirming the changes and giving them fresh impetus and new direction. It is to be hoped that in any assessment of his legacy, his role as transmitter and agent of Christianity as a world religion will be recognized. Little of that has been reflected so far in accounts of his accomplishments and yet it is unquestionably the case that, with remarkable stamina and with unwavering vision, John Paul II presided over Catholicism as a world religion, as a world church—and that way of describing the Catholic church is not an oxymoron. The way to understand the changes is to think of a heartland Catholicism with its great cathedrals, its great heritage and legacy in art and literature, philosophy, theology, great music, buildings and architecture, and frontier Catholicism where the greatest monuments of the church are living men and women, often children, and where the greatest buildings of the church lie in the distant future. They have not been built yet because the church is too busy receiving new members and establishing them in the faith."

■ Staying with Lamin Sanneh for a moment, he touches interestingly on the meeting between Islam and Christianity: "So thorough and so complete has been the Islamic capture of Arab culture as its necessary and inalienable medium that it has been difficult to conceive of a time in the pre-Islamic age when Christianity and Arab culture were congruent, as, indeed, they were. The name 'Abdalláh,' 'slave or servant of God,' for example, had been intoned over the heads of numerous Arab children at the baptismal font of the church long before it became the name of the father of the founder of Islam. Yet today, that name is properly and almost exclusively the property of Islam, suggesting a Muslim cultural revolution that effectively dissolved Christianity in its once Arab stronghold. Arab Christians survived as historical remnants, sometimes tolerated, sometimes repressed, but more often on notice." From the beginning, Christians were uncertain about the right response to Islam: "In his thought-provoking examination of the issue, Sir Richard Southern argued that the reality of Islam was the most far-reaching problem facing medieval Christendom, affecting every level of experience. At the practical level it called for action, including the Crusades. Islam was a gathering geopolitical challenge that had to be resisted. As a theological problem it called for an answer to the mystery of its existence and apparent

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resilience. Was Islam a Christian heresy? Was it a schism? Or was it a new religion? What was God's role in it, or was it a religion devised by the devil? Does its system of thought deserve to be treated with respect? The feeling all this engendered was that Islam was close enough intellectually to make differences with Christianity familiar, if no less objectionable for that. Islam upholds belief in one God, but that sublime teaching ends up with a repudiation of the Holy Trinity. An old theological principle produced the incomprehensible novelty that was Islam."

■ Was it Aristotle who said that friendships are formed by shared delights? Or maybe our editor was just making it up. In any event, he has this great idea that you might share your delight in FIRST THINGS by sending us names of family members, friends, and associates to whom we can send a sample issue. Mentioning that it was your idea, of course. Reading FIRST THINGS might turn those associates into friends, or at least into better-informed associates. Do send us that list soon. Like maybe today? Please send names and addresses by surface mail to FIRST THINGS, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York 10010 or by e-mail to *subscriberservices@pma-inc.net*. On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call our toll-free subscription number 1-800-783-4903 or visit our website at *www.firstthings.com*.

Sources: Instruction on the priesthood, *Commonweal*, December 16, 2005; D'Arcy statement, November 29, 2005; Bruce Williams paper, November 29, 2005; Niederauer interview, *Intermountain Catholic News*, December 19, 2005; Coleman in *San Francisco Faith*, December 2005; Keenan in *Theological Studies*, May 2003; the instruction from Rome, *origins*, December 8, 2005.

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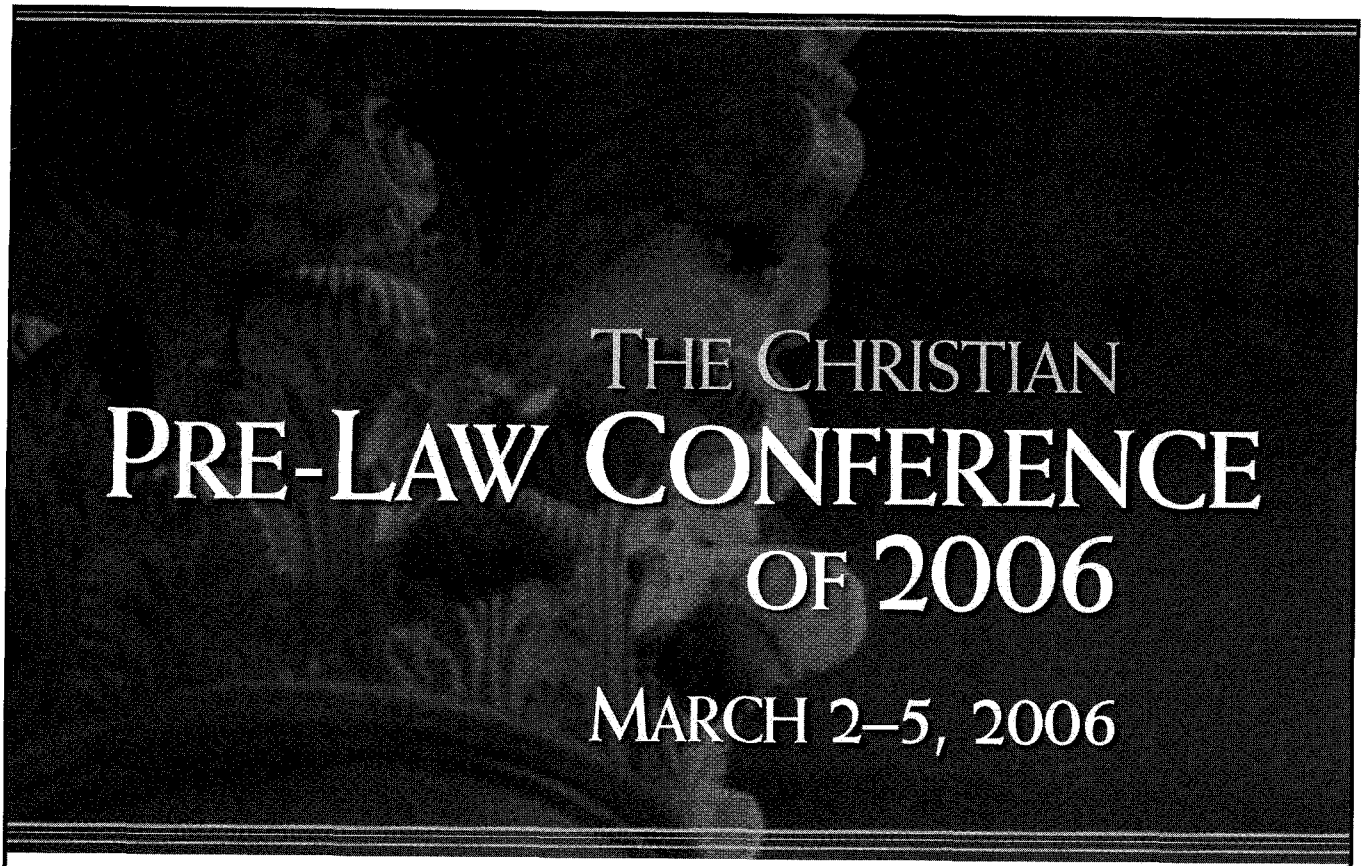

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